

THE
BREATH
OF THE
RUNNERS
A NOVEL



BY MARY MEARS

THE BREATH OF THE RUNNERS

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A NOVEL

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MARY MEARS

To succeed!—this word, unknown a century since, is to-day the sovereign ruler of all lives.—TAINE.



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To

MY DEAR FRIEND ALICE GREENWOOD CHAPMAN

AND TO

HELEN FARNSWORTH MEARS

THIS BOOK IS AFFECTIONATELY AND

GRATEFULLY INSCRIBED

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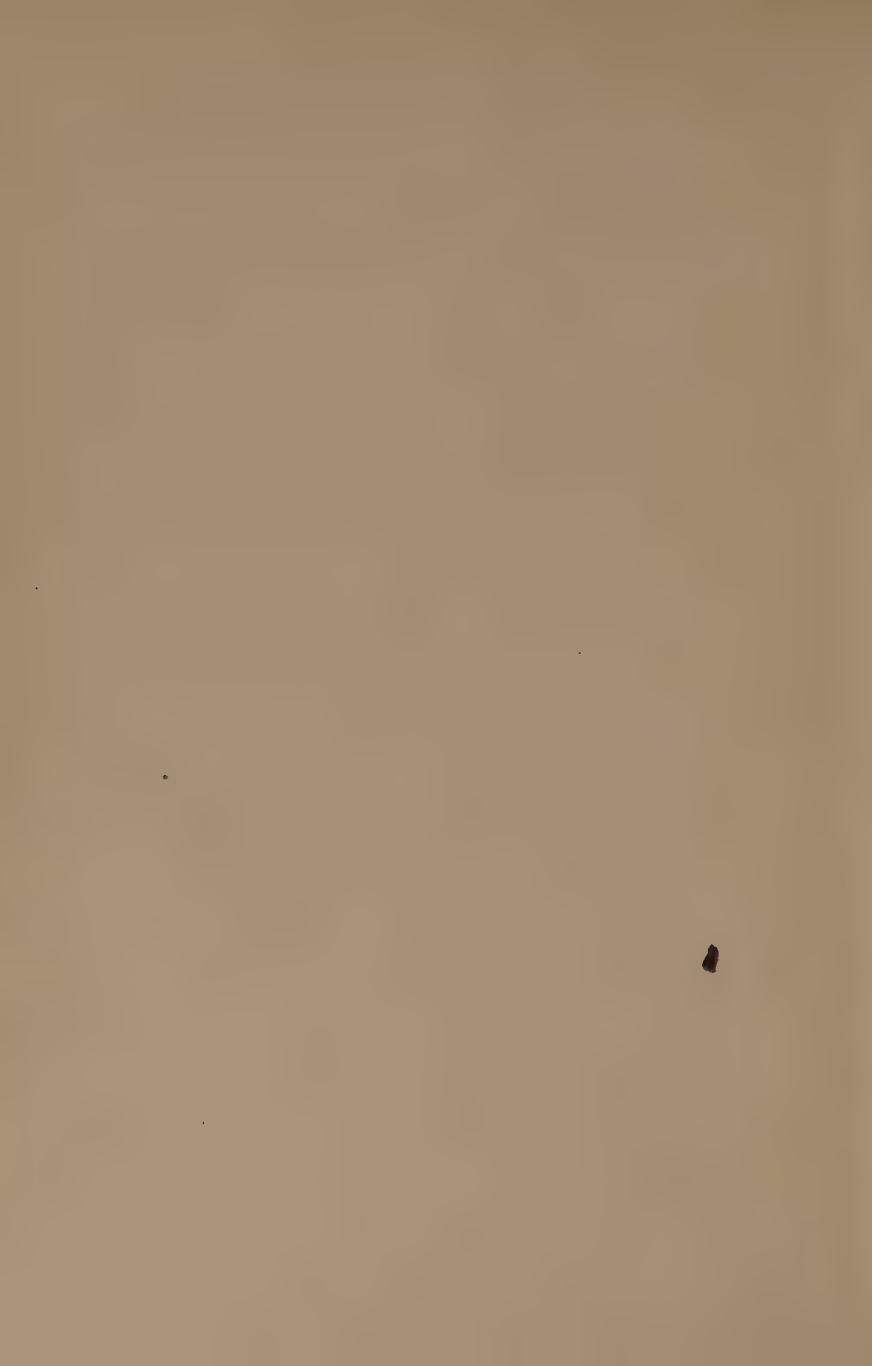
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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

So long as there shall exist in the human breast an insatiable desire to attain some object, it matters not what, if the quarry pursued outranks in importance the methods employed to attain it; so long as need, selfishness, or, most terrible of all, an imperious and unappeasable ambition urge forward the worker, the man of science studies until plunged into an abyss of madness, the artist creates until he sinks: in other words, so long as our cities are centres of inflamed and abnormal activity into which all types are drawn and set acting and reacting upon one another in a relentless and incessant struggle to attain preëminence, just so long the parable contained in *The Breath of the Runners* must have weight.

NEW YORK, 1906.

BOOK I
THE START



CHAPTER I

THE RETURNED SHOES

“IT stands to reason, Madame, that as we bring the leather tight over the instep, the toes spread. And Madame cannot deny that the fit is perfection.”

“Oh yes, they fit, but they hurt.”

“Hurt! And each toe having so much room? Madame, regard my hand. I squeeze it *so*, and what of the fingers — do they not spread? Well, it is the same with the toes. I give them freedom. I liberate the toes.”

Beulah Marcel tried not to listen to the conversation going forward in the shop. It was a familiar conversation and she could see as well as if the curtain over the door had not been drawn, her father, — handsome, persuasive, fiery, squeezing his shapely French hand in illustration of his favourite theory, — and the customer divided between the arguments of mind and feet. Often the customer, in nine cases out of ten a lady, would leave, doubting the evidence of the tortured members in the pleasant memory of the shoemaker's eyes and his adorable accent. But more often the shoes remained in the shop. Gaston was

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an artist in his line, but, owing to his theories, the place was filled with misfits.

Beulah herself was wearing a pair now, as was her young brother, Jules, a big growing lad of twelve. His somewhat awkward feet, encased in a pair of woman's gaiters, presented a feminine appearance not at all in accord with his strong head as he bent over his slate. Mrs. Marcel was binding shoes by the window.

When the street door closed and they heard Gaston, defeated but unruffled, return to his bench, Beulah looked at her mother: "That makes the second pair this week, doesn't it?"

Mrs. Marcel finished threading the machine before she answered. "Yes," she said then, "but you mustn't blame father."

The girl turned away with a little laugh. She had no intention of blaming her father.

Mrs. Marcel's face was outlined by folds of brown hair. She had eyes like those seen in pictures of the Virgin Mother — eyes as tenderly patient as cattle's and of as inviolable an innocence. She was one of those women who live as perfectly in accord with nature as a blade of grass. Both have their time of upspringing, of fruitage and decay, — then their children live after them — there is new grass in the meadow.

Of a different order, however, was her daughter Beulah. She might fulfil all the possibilities of her being, or few of them. At present, she was big and

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healthy and elemental, but her face, as round and fair-coloured as a child's, had a sleeping power behind it that almost unsexed it at this formative period. It was the face more of a growing thought than of a growing girl. Her hair was luxuriant and of that neutral tone which varies from the colour of wet sand to a quite blond lightness, according to the weather. For the rest, she managed her strong beautiful frame as if it encumbered her, though her touch could not have been finer. Now she resumed her occupation, that of carving a head on a lump of beeswax. She sat low on her father's bench with her knees slanted together. From her position, she might have been pegging a shoe, which she had done not infrequently when an old one was to be repaired, though more often she aided her mother in binding the new ones.

Now she was ostensibly idling, but her thoughts were busy enough. The periods when her father was gone from home — and he went every fall on long hunting expeditions — were the periods of greatest prosperity in the shop. He employed proficient workmen, and, under Mrs. Marcel's direction, for two months the business prospered; then Gaston reappeared, and shoes with broad toes and tight insteps began to accumulate. A species of fine loyalty and finer courtesy kept his family from commenting upon the result. But this did not prevent Beulah from growing firm in her resolution to be of practical help to the family. The subject had been discussed a great

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deal of late, but no decision had been reached, principally because the girl had aspirations which she said nothing about, but which the parents recognized and hesitated to discourage. Now she carved the beeswax sombrely and determined on renunciation.

The Marcells occupied small basement quarters on Twenty-third Street, New York. The top of the front door was on a level with the pavement. A flat tin boot hung over the door, and under it was a creaking sign, bearing this legend —

GASTON MARCEL
BOOT-MAKER TO THE LADIES
God bless them!

The last phrase was in French and was such a source of piquant inquiry to those who did not understand the language, and an indication of such hearty appreciation to those who did, that it brought him many customers from the more fashionable class — women who, after they entered the shop, were attracted quite as much by the handsome shoemaker himself as by his sign, and who continued to get their shoes of him in defiance of both economy and comfort. He made a calfskin bootee which he sold at six dollars a pair. Shoes of like grade were turned out by the factories, a pair every ten minutes, and sold for three dollars. But Gaston's were hand-sewed, as he had occasion very often to explain. The making occupied a day, and they were, moreover, shaped to that last of his own

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designing. In short, such shoes could be obtained nowhere else; which was incontrovertibly true. And thus Gaston's shoes came into vogue because, let it be whispered, he himself was so much the vogue, as such men always must be, as long as the world loves a man who has never discovered the secret of his own lovable-ness.

When Gaston entered the living-room, which was something of a shop also, his demeanour was serene and unruffled and he wagged his head pleasantly at his daughter when he saw what she was about. "Ah, it is a woman's head this time," he said, as she held out the beeswax on the palm of her hand. "It has the look of a cameo. I used to know a man who was a cameo-cutter by trade," he added. "He was an Englishman and crossed with me the first time."

His daughter looked up at him quickly. But she said nothing and presently began paring down the beeswax so that the head stood out from a flat, oval-shaped background. She had to lay it aside to help her mother prepare supper, but after the meal was partaken of, she finished it and brought it to her father.

"Not at all bad," he said approvingly, examining it through a squinted eye. "I have seen worse heads than that in many a jeweller's window, though perhaps I'm not a judge."

The girl put her hand on the back of his chair. "You might take it to him and see," she suggested, "the man

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you spoke of, you know. Perhaps he would take me for a 'prentice."

Gaston stroked his short beard, his eyes kindling. "And why not?" he exclaimed; "you have the ability." And thereupon he strode into his wife's room where she was putting the youngest Marcel, a toddler of two, to bed. He closed the door and Beulah went over to a window which looked out on a narrow court, enclosed and embowered with vines like a French garden. It was here that the family were wont to take their meals during the warm weather, and to spend their Sundays. Twenty years before, Gaston had beautified it as a place for his young wife to walk with her first baby. She was an American, but her loveliness was of a type which subtly expatriated her in her husband's eyes, and so he had given her this setting, which might have been copied from a *Da Vinci* in the Louvre, and perhaps was. At least, the garden and the woman with the children that came to cluster about her knees suited each other perfectly. And if some of this early fruitage died, a boy and a girl, why, there were still three children left.

Beulah Marcel reached forth an arm and let it rest in the cool grass, while with her other hand she propped her head. She could hear her father's voice. He was speaking English (he had long ago despaired of teaching his wife his own language), but it was an English that sounded like French. Beulah did not trouble herself to listen. She knew her mother would approve

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the plan. The only questions to be considered were, whether the cameo-cutter could be found and whether he would take her.

The Marcells made no distinction in the consideration of their children, but looked ahead to a future for their girl as independent as a boy's. Not one of the three thought of the craft's being an unusual one for a woman.

When her father came out of the bedroom, he beckoned to her and she followed him into the shop, which was now almost dark. "We will look in the directory," he said; "if James Wooding is in this country, he will probably be at his old place on Lexington Avenue." Trembling with eagerness, she leaned over the great book, and he lit a lamp and held it at her elbow. She ran her finger down column after column of Woods and Woodings. Suddenly she looked up. "Here's his name," she said.

There was no time like the present, Gaston remarked, and when he had gone, carrying with him, as proof of her skill, the little beeswax relief, she remained at the door. The lamp on the desk flared in the draught, lighting up the remotest corners of the shop — the work-bench and the low shelves on which reposed the misfits and the shoes to be repaired; on the floor some wooden lasts suggested a collection of feet — everywhere feet. It was the same in the street. From her lowly vantage, Beulah could see them passing and re-passing, well-shod feet and ill-shod feet and feet not

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shod at all; women's feet and men's feet and the feet of little children, some dragging, some limping, some hurrying, some running, all intent upon an object. The girl marked them wistfully. Soon she hoped to join that procession, and where would her feet carry her? To James Wooding's? Would he take her to learn his trade?

The artist's desire to create had long animated her, and it had needed but the mention of cameo-cutting for her to see the practical fulfilment of her dream, and this when she had almost given up hope. Artists did not make money. Even Mr. Rahfield, in the studio at the top of the building, even he could not always pay his rent. She had heard Enid say so, and he painted very large pictures. But here was a way open to her. James Wooding *must* accept her as an apprentice.

And he did accept her, without, however, knowing her sex, let it casually be mentioned, the father having simply alluded to her as his eldest child. When Gaston returned, Beulah listened to him in an excitement too deep for words. James Wooding had made some objections at first, but in the end had been persuaded, and an arrangement had been made. For the first three months, until she had mastered the barest rudiments of the art, she was to work without payment. After that, if the work merited it, she was to have eight dollars a week, to be increased as Wooding saw fit. And the apprentice was to be bound to him for a period of five years to reimburse him for his trouble, but

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principally to insure the proficiency of the learner. "Cameo-cutting is a fine art," Gaston concluded grandly, repeating Wooding's statement, "and one cannot learn it in a day."

Beulah waited only for the last words to be uttered, then she fled up to the street and in at the principal door of the building, through winding halls and upstairs. Flight after flight she climbed; it seemed to her her happiness could not have been greater. When she reached the last landing, she knocked on the door immediately ahead, then opened it and almost fell into the apartment.

"Enid!" she cried.

A portière moved and out from behind it stepped a man with a Vandyke beard, and startled black eyes. He wore a velvet coat which intensified the natural pallor of his skin, and on the back of his head was a painter's cap.

"I'll be out in a minute," cried a young voice at his back, and an instant later she appeared — a strange little apparition in a dressing-gown, her face gleaming whitely from between strands of dark straight hair, like a lily from between its leaves.

"What is it?" she cried.

Before their united gaze, Beulah's message waned in significance. "I'm going to learn cameo-cutting," she stammered.

Henry Rahfield turned away.

"That, of course, is only the beginning of the real

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thing," she went on, gaining confidence, her voice thrilling curiously, "for I'm going to be an artist."

He looked around at her. He tried to smile cynically, but his eyes were wistful. "You call that being the 'real thing'?" he asked.

Neither heeded him. Enid had sprung towards Beulah. "An artist like papa?" she demanded.

The visitor dissembled. She did not like Enid's father's pictures, though the life he represented had fired her imagination.

"No," she said warily. "I shall be another kind. I'm going to be a sculptor."

Enid drew her imperatively into the small space curtained off at one end of the studio, where the simple housekeeping arrangements of the pair were revealed. "Tell me about it," she said.

And with a technical ignorance and an innate knowledge, the sublime blending of which she would never achieve again, Beulah told her. And, sterile from much training, Henry Rahfield listened, for his soul was hungry.

"I shall but commence with these little heads and figures," Beulah concluded with a touch of feeling, for Enid did not comprehend the transition from a cameo-cutter to a sculptor, "but they will be like the seed of a tree, for in the end I shall make statues." The utterances of mature wisdom are often the sayings of youth with the stamp of the divine washed off.

And Beulah was to grow her rare tree of art. She

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went home with that inspiration in her heart which is the nearest neighbour to success. Gaining her own little room, she found a dress in which her mother had set the last stitches, hung on the bedpost, and the shoes which the customer had brought back, beside a chair. They had a mute "returned" look, but ambition, despair, and dogged determination would characterize their different wrinkles ere they were outworn and went the way of all old shoes, telling their tale to — the ragpicker or to any one wise enough to regard them. Oh, the tale of the shoes! If men would but look, they could read many a fine biography.

CHAPTER II

THE PATH OF THE SHOES

THE building was tall and red-faced. It pushed forward more than any other on the street, and its front steps licked the pavement like a tongue. It glared from two second-story bow-windows, and when people entered its door it seemed to swallow them and lie in fierce wait for more. It was a very glutton of a building. But it had periods when it ejected what it had swallowed. At night, the labourers on contract work, that had entered it in the morning with some semblance of alertness, came forth changed, haggard, drooping, as if iron jaws behind the brick cheeks had broken them. And, indeed, there were iron jaws there, jaws in which the molars were sweat-shops, and the front teeth, presenting a fair show to the world, a millinery establishment, a bird-stuffer's, and James Wooding's.

No more wholesome fare had ever offered itself to this beast in masonry than Beulah Marcel. She came with Gaston, her eyes filled with shy gladness.

She was very fresh and neat and she carried a parcel in which was a small head of Apollo crudely carved in

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wood. Gaston helped her from the car and then pointed out the building as they crossed to the curb. Gaston was of the peasantry — a finer, honester type than any bred in your cities of France, his aristocracy being that of a gentle, jovial spirit.

He entered James Wooding's in advance of his daughter, to whom he first whispered a word of assurance. If her prospective employer was a bit crusty, she must not mind. An Englishman's manners often shrank, like his frame, with age. And indeed she had reason to remember this, else her courage would have forsaken her utterly at the first glare Wooding gave her. "Girl!" he cried, and if he had said "Devil," he couldn't have concentrated in the word more fury and disgust. "Why didn't you say so?"

"Pardon me," said Gaston with a flush. "My daughter has the talent and that was all that I thought of. Come, Beulah."

But with shaking hands she had taken the paper from the head of Apollo.

"Let me see that!" commanded Wooding, and she handed it to him.

The shoemaker turned with his hand on the door. His attitude said plainly that the decision must be made at once.

"How old are you?" asked Wooding.

"Fourteen."

"Let me see your hands."

She spread them out. They were as strong as a

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boy's though more beautifully formed, with long flexible thumbs.

"You can stay here three days," he told her. "If you are going to be able to do anything, I'll keep you. If not, I'll let you go then."

And so Beulah stayed not three days, but three years, with the doom of dismissal hanging over her constantly.

Wooding's shop occupied what had formerly been a front chamber in the mansion. It was very neat. In the window which looked towards Lexington Avenue there was a small case of finished cameos, and at a side window stood two lathes. When her father had gone, Wooding pointed to the second of these and the girl climbed on the high stool. Then he showed her the tools — hundreds of drills, in all but a handful, some as fine as a cambric needle, the thickness to be determined by the portion of the design being worked. There was also a small receptacle filled with oil and diamond-dust. With nervous care, he worked and she watched.

His face was so lean that there were hollows under the cheek-bones, and he had a thin, downward-curving mouth, edged with a sparse moustache, of which he occasionally caught stray tags between his teeth. His nose was an ugly stump and his eyes two crows that watched. In short, it was a lowering landscape of a face and one continually at storm. He worked, humped over his lathe, his fingers playing nimbly with the stone.

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At the end of an hour, he handed it to Beulah. It was a kind of quartz, on which the design was well outlined.

"Now go ahead and spoil it!" he commanded.

With a strong effort she forced the tears back and steadied her hand. The pedal moved, the wheel swung round, the drill began its fine work. Bzzzzzzzzzz! Bzzzzzzzzzz! Now the two lathes together, for, after hovering over her for awhile, Wooding returned to his. "*Girl!*" he whispered, "Bah-h-h!" and the word seemed to fly off spitefully from his wheel and to be caught on hers and flung into her very face.

Ashamed, yet hardly knowing why, with eyes that smarted from the strain upon them, for they must acquire almost the power of a microscope, with nerves at a high tension, with aching bones and a sore heart, Beulah worked, and Wooding's scoldings proceeded like a disagreeable chant, set to the music of the lathes.

And the first day was a sample of all the others, except that the causes for complaint multiplied. She spoiled two cameos nearly completed, from sheer nervousness, and Wooding never forgot this. He railed at her ignorance of modelling, he damned her drawing. "But what could one expect of a woman," he would conclude. There was always this refrain, and sometimes in his rage he would bring down his hand on the stand. Then all the little tools taken out of the box for convenience, the oil-can, and the dish of diamond-dust would rise together. And the time came when the girl could see a certain humour in this,

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but not at first. She cowered with a sense of her sex until her brave spirit rebelled, and her very womanhood sheathed itself in a callousness almost masculine. This training, though Spartan, was beneficial in after years. But in these first months, after a day in the shop, she would stagger home, silently swallow her supper, and then steal up to Enid, before whom she would sit shedding a kind of inward tears, while the younger child caressed her. Enid was her saviour then. The strong quiver of power in the little feminine frame reassured her. Enid could compel things which clumsier wills could not touch. She could reach heights which Woodings wot not of.

And so Beulah, yielding perhaps to the instinct of self-protection, grew her shell, as it were. And when Wooding scolded, instead of bending over her lathe and watching her cameo, she would sit back and hold the cameo at arm's length, the other hand placed jauntily on her hip.

The third year was just drawing to a close when the end came. The girl, by this time, was close to womanhood. With an instinctive longing for grace and beauty, she flung off the mark of her calling and walked with striking erectness. There was manifest in her a large patience and commanding force. At moments, when she let him see her scorn, Wooding was afraid of her. For the most part, she bore his abuse and bent every energy towards the accomplishment of one object, that of perfecting herself in the art of cameo-cutting. She

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would be servile, if need were, her desire was so great to acquire that knowledge. The law of need and supply makes strange partnerships sometimes, and at the end of the third year she felt that she still had much to learn.

She grew more and more silent, never mentioning her work at home. Jules had expanded from a big youngster into a magnificent boy. He attended the college across the street, for Beulah, as wage-earner, insisted on his keeping to his books longer than had been possible with her. And in grateful acknowledgment, he tried to act as her tutor. The two often sat in the tiny basement sitting-room, dimly lighted by a kerosene lamp, studying far into the night. Here Beulah wrestled with Latin and the higher mathematics. Of the former she made sad work, for she had inherited from her mother a certain dulness and inaptitude for the languages. There seemed to be no French blood in her, save a strain that made her, with almost pagan simplicity, love the beautiful.

The heart of an artist was in her, but as yet there was a healthy immaturity of mind, the slowness and wonder of a young animal that delights in, without suspecting, its own ignorance. Beulah Marcel was not fully awake, but she and her young brother tussled soberly with intellectual truths, digested a little, and grew as nature meant — their bodies first and their heads afterward.

For art and romance she climbed up to Enid, and

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it was the memory of these hours spent in the picture-haunted place that she carried with her to the shop. Henry Rahfield's talk of art and artists inspired her, though she accepted what he said with reservations, keen as they were crude. She had adopted nature as her model, and she applied this standard relentlessly to Henry Rahfield's impressionistic landscapes, though some of them had a dubious and uncertain charm for her. Then she and Enid read, and the next day she was able to dream poetry and turn a deaf ear to Wooding's brutal prose. While he ranted and thumped and turned himself into a very fury, she would calmly go over some sweet measure, and instead of his soured old visage, she would see Enid's pale, elf-like one, glowing with inward fire and hear her repeating:

"Last she stood up to her queenly height,
But she shook like an autumn leaf."

But one day, with these words singing through her mind, she woke to sudden consciousness. "Go! Get out of here! I won't have you in the place, lazy, good-for-nothing —"

It was all about some crumbs which had fallen on the floor when she ate her lunch and which she had neglected to sweep up. She realized this vaguely as she looked at him. He repeated the command with a string of vituperation. A woman could usually sweep, but she couldn't even do that, it seemed. He had never sworn at her before, but he ended with an oath. It was

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the lightning flash that strikes the tree. She got down from her high stool, and taking off her workman's blouse, folded it up. Then she put on her hat and went to the door.

She felt a strange lightness and blankness. She felt much as we shall all feel, perhaps, the first instant after death. Three years of apprenticeship were lost — years of ache and toil and tears, of anger, determination, and hope. They had been knocked off her life, as it were, by a mere rattle of wrathful words spoken by a little pounding old man. As she closed the door, James Wooding thrashed his table, making his tools to dance what was a very dance of death to the girl who staggered down the steps into the street. She still had much to learn about cameo-cutting — so much that to start out for herself was out of the question. It was all gone. For an instant she stood holding the rail while Rossetti's words, "last she stood up to her queenly height," still surged insistently through her mind.

The stanza helped her to hold her head erect while she was in sight of James Wooding and the building. But when she entered the car, she huddled into a corner and sat there clutching her bundle hard: a big, thoughtful, feminine creature — she was all feminine now — with tragedy in her eyes and a quiver along her quiet lips, which told how her hope, like a sun, had gone down. And she was only seventeen, and it was strange at that age to be a mere shadow of one's self; for life was ended, all the part that counted. The well-nigh

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empty room and the two lathes and James Wooding constituted a hell in which she had suffered unavailingly in the hope of a heaven of cameos, minus James Wooding. It was all over and to no end whatever.

How her wheel had spun round, million on millions of times, and how the minute figures and heads had grown under her drill, the children of her fancy brought to visible birth, in sapphire and carnelian and amethyst! And what travail they had cost! How she had worked and ached in all her young bones, how her head had whirled, how the tension of her nerves had been almost unbearable, and how — poor pitiful triumph now — with two exceptions when she had spoiled a fortnight's work by a tremble — how she had kept her hand steady while Wooding's words, in time to the ceaseless, maddening buzz of the wheel, had beat upon and threatened to engulf her! And it was owing to her sex solely that she had, at the last, been defeated. Wooding would have excused the crumbs had she been a boy.

The legend on her father's sign was a pointed irony. She went into her father's shop and stood before them all — her mother and her father and her fat little brother with his cherub face. Her attitude told the story, but she explained when they questioned her, dully and with no show of fire under the words.

For some time the parents had understood how it was with their daughter. Elizabeth Marcel gave her husband a glance, and, putting Louis from her side,

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went across to the girl. "I'm glad you have left there," she said, smoothing her hair.

"And I too," exclaimed Gaston, and then, what was uncommon with him, he swore heartily in French, which his women-folk could not understand. To Beulah's surprise, neither took it as seriously as she did. They saw how she felt, and appreciated, as she did not, that Wooding would be loth to lose her.

"Mark my words, he will want you back," declared Gaston.

But she shook her head. "I will not go back," she said.

A curious expression of pride came into his face at that, and he, in his turn, stole a quick glance at Elizabeth.

They were right. Half an hour later Wooding appeared. He entered and rapped on the door with his cane. It was a brusque rap, but there was, nevertheless, a sneaking hint of apology in it. They sent Beulah out, and then Gaston asked him into the living-room. The girl did not pause. She crept through the garden and, by a circuitous route, through another basement where surgical instruments were for sale, out into the street, and so up to Enid. What a different climb from that other when she had gone to tell the news of her apprenticeship. Enid met her at the door, and with a glance over her shoulder at the clock, which showed several work-hours still, and another at Beulah's face, which showed that the

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work-hours were at an end, she drew her friend in. And then the two stood hand in hand at one of the long windows and waited for Wooding to go.

A slow, terrible anger was beginning to take possession of Beulah, and she could feel the quicker passion of her companion. When at length Wooding stumped up to the street, she took Enid in her arms in one of the rare embraces which the child, by her exquisite understanding, sometimes moved her to, and then went downstairs.

Gaston and Elizabeth met her with reassuring smiles. They had never seemed so much her father and her mother as at that moment. "It was as we thought," they exclaimed. And then Gaston told her what Wooding had said, taking magnificent pains, however, not to reveal what he himself felt.

"Wooding admitted that he was a little hasty," he began, "and he wants you back. He wants you back at an increase of wages," he added, rubbing his hands. "Twelve dollars a week, which is half as much again as you have been getting. What do you say, eh?"

Beulah looked out stupidly into the garden for a moment. Three long years of apprenticeship made nothing of, or allowed to mature and bear worthy fruit for these, her father, and her mother with the Madonna eyes, and her young brothers, — that was the question. But was it?

Her head came up and her glance met her father's.

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"No," she said, and then her eyes filled with quick tears. "Oh," she cried, "do not ask me to!"

"Ask you to!" Gaston took her face between his hands and she vaguely perceived her mother's glowing look. She was grateful to them that they understood. But it would have been the same if they had not. The shoes in which she had started had been worn out on a path from which she herself had obliterated the goal.

CHAPTER III

DISCIPLES

MATTHIAS HOWE popped his head out of a Gothic window to take a peep at the morning. It was a bit damp in the old church where he lived, and he had need of the sun which found that side of the building only for an hour or two when it rose and poured a golden glory into the alley, through a space between two tenements. The rest of the day it was dark down there, and children played on the cracked asphalt and slapped each other. They were a sort of little angel-devil, Matthias considered, and sometimes he called them in, and, giving them pennies, told them to look oftener at the plaster saints in the window next his.

Save this corner, which was partitioned off from the gallery, the edifice was occupied by an Italian who made a specialty of church statues and tombstones. Thus, while diverted from its original purpose, the church preserved a semi-religious character, comforting to the society of Methodists who had sold it to Giovanni. The Methodists had bought it of a Baptist congregation, and even then it had not been new. It had been sung in and prayed in for the greater part of a century,

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to tell the truth, and, being of wood, it had rotted until it was no longer safe for great masses of people. And now only Giovanni prayed in it as he modelled Madonnas and St. Peters, and only old Matthias sang. He was singing this morning when he poked his head out of the window.

With his hands pressed back against the sill, he looked not unlike a jolly gargoyle, if you can conceive one made of ruddy flesh instead of stone. Matthias had the pink and white complexion of one of his own shell cameos; for the rest, he very much resembled the church. It was as if his spirit, twenty years before, when he entered the place, had in some sort marked his body. Certain it is that in colour he resembled a shell, and the shape of him was Gothic. His white hair was combed to a point above his round face, and when idle he had a trick of clasping his hands in front of him so that his arms did not interfere with the straight downward lines of his blouse. In short, his figure would have just fitted into one of those open high-shouldered trefoils which look like monks on Gothic cathedral fronts.

But Matthias was seldom still. Now, however, he drank in the morning — the wine of the morning, he would have called it, for he was fond of his glass and therefore fond of any figure of speech that suggested it — and sang. But suddenly he ceased and drew in his head. "That child'll be along before a great while," he reflected, "and I can do nothing for

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her. I want no assistant, as I distinctly told Mrs. White."

Yet when Beulah opened the door, the details of her story rushed into his mind and he smiled.

"So you are Mrs. White's young friend?" he interrogated genially.

"She is a customer of my father's," responded the girl, "but I see you cut shell cameos," she added in a disappointed voice.

Matthias was touched. Here was a loophole, but still he temporized. "Why, yes," he said, "there isn't so much call for them as there is the stone, but they're cheaper, and on the whole, I think, more beautiful. Here is a portrait I have just finished of Mrs. White's husband."

The girl looked at it with a quick show of enthusiasm. "It is very beautiful," she said, and the care with which she examined it revealed how intelligent was her appreciation. "Shell must be very difficult to cut, it's so fragile."

"It is," agreed Matthias, rubbing his hands together in a way he had when pleased. "And you have cut only the stone, I understand."

"Yes," she assented, and she handed the portrait back, her face clouding.

"Well, well, I'm sorry you're down on your luck," he murmured. "Mrs. White told me all about it, And who was your employer?"

"Wooding, James Wooding."

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"Wooding, eh! I know the fellow, I think. An English chap with a temper as keen as a drill. Of course he couldn't abide a crumb on the floor. Well it's too bad — too damn bad that you fell into his clutches."

Beulah looked down. His sympathy was so unexpected that the unwonted tears started to her eyes.

Matthias saw them and began to walk up and down rapidly. Presently he came to a stand before her. "I'll tell you what I'll do," he said. "I've got an old stone-cutter's lathe somewhere and I'll hunt it up and you shall finish your apprenticeship right here. No, no, don't thank me," he interpolated. "I need an assistant anyhow. I've been thinking a great deal about it lately." He might have added "very lately."

And so Beulah's fortunes changed. She knew far more of cameo-cutting than Wooding had allowed her to suppose, and Matthias, in delight, offered her fourteen dollars a week. "You'll be worth that to me," he informed her, and Beulah returned his kindness by subsequently refusing sixteen dollars from Wooding, who again sought to re-employ her. He went to her father's shop and, when persuasion failed, he threatened Gaston with the law. "She owes me two years' apprenticeship," he stormed. Gaston shook his head. "Not when you yourself terminated the arrangement," he said. And Beulah remained with Matthias Howe in his corner of the old church, growing like a flower in a crevice.

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He was so elated over his assistant and the increase of business which she subsequently brought him, that he confided in Giovanni. The girl certainly had talent and if he, Matthias, would give her two hours at noon, would Giovanni allow her the use of modelling clay and the privilege of watching him at his work? To this Giovanni reluctantly consented. He had roving dark eyes, a heart that was not all bad, since he prayed sometimes — to get the right expression into the faces of his saints — and if he had a fault, it was the quite common one of desiring to get something for nothing. The proposition of the cameo-cutter, seeming to mean a reversion of this principle, did not meet with his full favour. However, Beulah proved unexpectedly useful and he was able, before long, to make the desired adjustment.

Perceiving her natural facility, he allowed her, as a great favour, to try her hand on a soldier's tomb that was troubling him. It was a naval coat with a sword resting on it, and on the pedestal was an anchor and a wreath of laurel. The design did not appeal particularly to Beulah, but she worked faithfully on it and succeeded in infusing a fine sentiment into the tattered coat. Matthias Howe was delighted, though he was disgusted that Giovanni paid her nothing, and, at his suggestion, she began attending the night modelling class at the Institute of Art. Here she modelled and drew from the antique and finally gained admission to the life-class.

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Then it was that the dream of art began to assert its full sway over her. The weeks were not long enough with their meagre hours each evening, and Sundays she pressed her family into service as models. She drew a fine likeness of her mother, which Gaston, with pride, hung up in the shop and which brought her her first patron.

John Thayer was at heart a countryman, so he lived in Brooklyn, and came way across the long bridge to buy his shoes of Gaston, because they were hand-sewed and smacked of the primitive and simple things he loved. But he had them roomy, even across the instep, hotly contesting the reasonableness of Gaston's theories with him. Gaston's shoes injured the feet, he claimed, and to prove himself in the right, he wore a shoe of Gaston's designing on one foot, and one of his own planning on the other, for a week, at the end of which time he came and boldly exhibited the result to the shoemaker. He ripped off his socks and called Gaston's attention to the white comfort of one foot and the inflamed condition of the other.

"Why, man, I wouldn't endure such torture again for all the shoes you could give me," he cried. "Look at the colour of that, and the callouses!"

But Gaston remained unshaken. "It only proves," he said, "that you should have worn my shoes sooner when your feet were more pliable. Now, of course, they are as tough and spreading as the roots of an old tree. I make shoes for young and beautiful feet," he

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added. Upon which John Thayer hastily resumed his socks. But he had his shoes as broad as he wished after that.

When Gaston exhibited his sketch of "the Madame," which was his quaint way of alluding to Mrs. Marcel, Thayer was charmed. He complimented the parents upon the skill of their daughter, and ended by asking if she could give a lesson twice a week to his little ones in Brooklyn. When they explained to him how she was engaged during the day, he proposed that she come across on the ferry two mornings a week, finishing with the youngsters in time to be back at her lathe by half-past eight. And this was the arrangement ultimately carried out.

Beulah was now doing the work of three people under ordinary conditions, but she throve in the atmosphere of this border land of the art world, and each day brought its keen pleasures.

The early morning trips on the ferry-boats were a never-failing source of delight. There were few passengers on the first boat to Brooklyn, the press being the other way, and she had a feeling sometimes as if the boat and the river and the very sky belonged to her. Except in the wettest weather, she stood out in front, an eager, keen-eyed figure, with cheeks glowing to the sting of the spray. Foggy mornings were her especial delight. What poetry in the hidden wharfage, becoming visible for a moment here and there — in the incessant calls of the boats, with the excitement of a

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possible encounter — in the great arch of the bridge which showed only when the wind whipped off a rag of cloud, disclosing the great substantial arc suspended between two cities, like a bow of promise!

And if at this end of the trip she found only three sleepy children, sucking their pencils and kicking the table as they waited for her, on her return there was the metropolis just waking to life. She would leave John Thayer's house, a quiet old mansion on Bedford Avenue with a vine swinging over the front porch and a large garden surrounding it, as refreshed as if she had had a taste of the country. Gaily the early sun gilded the up-side of the leaves, there, and how fresh was the smell of the dew on the grass, and how the flowers rioted beside the paths!

The children — a not remarkable three, two girls and a boy, — were good children with no taste for art, so they got on famously. Beulah did most of the drawing, which the parents, with the universal blindness of parents in such matters, exhibited proudly as the work of their offspring. Of course the teacher had helped, they admitted, but wasn't that pretty good perspective for a boy of seven, and how well Mary had done that flower! And these treasures, so worthy in love's eyes, if not in art's, were framed and hung in the parlour, and who shall say they were not rightly placed for these folk who loved the limning of a little child which was their own, better than the recognized charms of a master-piece.

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Once Beulah brought her little brother, a vital, vivid child much resembling his father, to see these children who lived in a garden. But they looked at him gravely and were not waked to anything but a decorous responsiveness when he shrieked with delight over a toad gobbling an angle-worm. Why were there no toads in his father's garden? he asked. They helped him to pull the stray dandelions, strange country fugitives which he preferred to any of the other flowers, and when he went away, they piped after him kindly, "Come again, Louis! Come again!" But there was no glow on their faces like that on his, the difference being one of hearts, which presented all the contrast between quiet little puddles rippled by a breeze, and the leap of a mountain stream when it reaches an exciting point.

It was still so early when Beulah got back to New York that the sun lay low along the streets and all the humdrum traffic was touched by a golden glory. People sometimes seemed to be wading in the sunshine. The city was so mystically beautiful at that hour that she carried the influence of it into the old church, and the little white figures under her drill became the symbols of her thoughts made visible against a rosy background. She was learning now how to cut shell.

But the hours to which the others were but a mere approach were those spent in the life-class, two evenings out of every week. A kind-eyed man, whose criticisms, however, could be as cruel as a lash on a naked back, presided, and when he praised her,

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Beulah's spirits rose on wings, and when occasionally he found fault, they sank like a clod. But from the first she did brave work, her practice with the drill having been a fine preparation.

Along with nine other young women she worked from a model under the gas, in a stifling atmosphere, in a room reeking with immemorial dust, and was happier than she could ever hope to be again. The girls were a good-natured, clever lot. One or two did strong work, but mediocrity was the rule, and there were some whose work was so poor that Beulah wondered how the master brought himself to notice it at all. However, the ones that did the poorest work had the most time for singing, and a general spirit of good comradeship prevailed.

The men's life-class was in the next room, and after the models had left there was a general breaking-up and the two classes inspected each other's work. In this way Beulah met Richard Yates, a lithe handsome fellow who had received number one in the men's *concours*, just as Beulah had in the girls'. They were introduced one evening on the ground of their common success, and afterwards Richard walked home with her, Jules, for the boy always appeared promptly on the stroke of ten, making an absorbed third. He conjugated Latin verbs to the tune of Richard's conversation.

Richard talked well. He had studied with private masters and at the schools ever since he was a little

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fellow, and his arguments were the summing up of what he had acquired, but he gave his words a youthful turn that made their embodied wisdom seem all his own, and Beulah began vaguely to envy his superior knowledge.

"What we need is practice," he said, "and not so much precept. Given a good model, we can dig out more for ourselves than we can get from any teacher. I work from models all the time," he continued, "and I tell you I rejoice more over one fault that I discover for myself, than I do over ninety-nine that old Dumont calls to my attention."

When he had gone and Jules had disappeared in the shop, Beulah stood hesitating under the swinging boot. The street was alive with lights, and a faint candle beam poured out from the fifth story in the building. "They're up, and I'm going to ask her," she muttered.

But she was wrong. Henry Rahfield was out and Enid was abed in her corner of the great shadowy place.

"How you startled me," she cried, peering from behind the curtain. "Come back here if you want to talk; it's too cold for me to get up."

By which Beulah knew that the child's back was worse. Enid was like a lily — but a lily with a cruel bend in its stalk. Excitements and unusual efforts were the storms that beat her down. In time, the doctors thought she might outgrow the affliction, and, with a pride so cold that it was scarcely childish, she

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never alluded to it. Thus the elder girl always sought the younger, though it might have been this way in any case, since Beulah felt, in a dim way, that she climbed spiritual stairs when she went to Enid.

To-night she looked at her tenderly. "I'm sorry I startled you," she said. "But I knew you would be awake. I need to work out of class on models," she continued, "and I want to model you, Enid — just for the head, of course," she added.

"Of course," thought the child. Her sensitiveness often led her to attach a sting to the most unconscious words.

"You are used to sitting for your father," pursued the other wistfully, "and I thought perhaps you wouldn't mind —"

Enid made a pretty gesture. "I'd be glad to," she said, "if you think I'd do. My features are very irregular."

"Irregular? Perhaps, but they're something more — you know well enough."

Enid smiled faintly. It was what she had wanted to hear. "We'll arrange it that way then," she said. "And you needn't consider that the favour is all on my side," she added thoughtfully.

The next night, being a free evening for Beulah, was set for the commencement of the bust. Enid occupied a chair on the model throne, her thin childish shoulders emerging from some folds of cheese-cloth.

"So that's the way you make the standard, is it?"

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she said, watching Beulah attach the last "butterfly" with intense interest. Henry Rahfield, also, was interested in the work, though he chose not to show it. He sat half hidden behind his newspaper and occasionally stole a glance over the edge of it. This big quiet girl ought to seek help from him; why had she not done so? he asked himself savagely. But he knew, and before the evening was half over, a sense of restless dissatisfaction sent him out into the street.

At the end of the sitting the head was broadly sketched. It was Enid even now, although the eyes were scarcely more than depressions and the nose and the fluted upper lip were but roughly suggested. It had the dignity of generalization. It slumbered in incompleteness, and only study would wake it from this large mystery into the charm of the living child. But the character and the pose were there; it was like the shadow of her rendered solid.

Beulah watched Enid eagerly. She knew by the colour that fluttered into her cheeks that the child was pleased.

"It is good," Enid said impressively, "very good, and I'm glad to have seen you do it, for it shows me where I made mistakes. I put no stick into mine and it falls down."

"What falls down?"

"The head I have been making of papa."

"Enid!"

"Yes, I, too, am going to be an artist," she remarked

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gravely. "The head I have made isn't as good as this," she added, "but I knew nothing when I commenced it. Besides I worked it from memory, for even papa doesn't know."

"Let me see it," commanded the elder girl, though the words died away faintly. She felt immeasurably separated from her friend.

Enid brought out a block of wood on which was an insecure erection wrapped about in a wet towel.

She placed the board on a low stand, and then went down on her knees and carefully removed the wrappings.

There it was, the head of Henry Rahfield in miniature, wabbly, out of construction, a crude, childish effort — but a brilliant one. There was indescribable daring in the way it was done.

"Well?" she questioned, touching it here and there, and then looking up.

For answer Beulah raised the little kneeling figure. Her eyes were filled with tears. But suddenly she put the child from her. "You have been working on this how long, and never told me?" she demanded.

"Two weeks. But until now I have never seen any of your work to compare it with," answered Enid, as though this explained everything. "The greatest fault with it is, that I've waked it up too soon, isn't it?" and she turned with a little grimace.

At this Beulah drew the child to her again. "Yes, you've waked it up too soon," she laughed. "But I'll

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teach you, Enid, all that I get at the school. You shall not lack because you are not able to get out; that you shan't. Oh, Enid! Enid!"

At that moment, Beulah's love for her friend almost equalled a mother's. There had been a lack of frankness, but the pain was lost in overwhelming admiration and pride. Enid, too, was to become a follower of that great mistress of all ages, that mistress who counts her disciples by hundreds, following her by devious paths. There was Wooding; even Wooding, paving the way with cameos, was a follower of art, and dear Matthias Howe, and old Giovanni, not to mention those in humbler paths, — and all the host of eager youth at the Institute pushing boldly into the high-road; besides, those masters beyond seas, whose names were only myths to her now. All these were following — following! And now the caravan was to be augmented by the small figure of her friend. Already Beulah saw that little cold face, at the very rear now, pressing forward and taking its place in the front rank. She saw and was filled with the unselfish devotion which marks alike the true friend and the true artist.

CHAPTER IV

"SUCCESS"

It was Sunday morning and nothing was stirring in Twenty-Third Street but the cable-cars circling around from the avenues, and the old beggar woman planted over against the fence of the college. She was eating her breakfast with vigorous motions of the jaws. There was no need for covert watchfulness this morning — it is a cruel law that puts beggars, like soldiers, the bulk of the time upon parade — and she could munch her bread and cheese, and sip from her black bottle, with no fear lest pedestrians spy upon her little comforts. Even the other old woman, her rival, was absent from her station further down the fence.

That old woman sold pins for a living and so, perforce, must respect the Sabbath. But there is no law that interferes with a beggar's following his profession to the week's end, and so this respectable old body, with smackings and gurglings, which are the honestest expression of gustatory delight, ate her breakfast and on a minute scale vied with the cable-cars, each crumb of bread and morsel of cheese and drop from the flask being as a passenger hurled around a curve in tre-

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mendous haste. When she had eaten and no car was visible on Lexington Avenue, that corner and she had the same look of innocent blankness. You would have thought that neither had known the hot trail of a car — or of whisky — the moment before.

Her breakfast finished, she was as still, except for the fluttering of her weeds, as the skeleton hung up in the window across the way. That set of bones, she had reason on certain occasions to declare, had once been the exclusive property of her husband, the immortal part of whom had entered the life beyond violently, and without waiting for the usual summons, having been, in fact, hurried thence by the state. It was sentiment which had led his widow to sell his bones to a hospital, which later disposed of them to the firm that manufactured surgical instruments, and it was still sentiment of a thrifty quality which made her choose her stand directly opposite them. They would probably be sold again, to a medical student or a doctor, in which case she would be on hand to plead for a modest stipend. She would, of course, defend her plea by the speech that had already served her. "'Ow do I know it be Jube? Look at that there place on 'is 'ead-piece, where the cop brought 'im a crack, and the groove in 'is hankle that Jube used to rub frequent cause it 'urted 'im. The chain eat in there. And that's not to mention the neck at all. Oh, 'is death were cruel undeserved. 'E never killed so much as a fly, let alone a 'uman man, and since the

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day 'e were tore from me, 'aven't I followed 'im 'round with constant lamentin'? 'E were a good 'usband, and now to see me sufferin', and not be able to 'elp me by so much as the price of a bone — it would break the 'eart of 'im."

This speech, punctuated with tears, could be counted upon to transform the dead man into a more positive means of support than he had ever been when alive. So she begged and munched and sipped, and kept her eyes on her dangling spouse, and was as much a feature of the block as the college itself.

"She's eating again," Enid remarked, turning from the window. "Old gormandizer! I believe she carries a whole larder with her."

Beulah smiled absently. Early as it was, she had been at work for an hour. It was her one free day.

Enid seated herself again on the model throne, thoughtfully adjusting the cheese-cloth. "Did you ever notice," she pursued, "how her body accents the meaning of her face? It isn't so with every one."

"It's so with you," answered the other quickly. "And that's why," she went on, "I should like to do a whole figure of you, Enid."

"Why don't you then?" asked the younger girl. And thus it happened that after about the fifth sitting the bust was abandoned and a figure rose in its place. The model wore a straight, scant gown (which Madame Marcel was at some trouble to make since it was after no recognized pattern), and the braids of her dark

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hair were twisted tightly about her head so that the nape of her slender neck was revealed. She was all delicacy, and yet all strength, a firm, slim little figure that held a globe in its hands, something as a child holds a ball, something as an Atlas, feminine, might hold the earth. The lips of the statue were parted in a smile and there was a curve of wings from the shoulders. It might fitly have been called a young girl or an angel. It was essentially a portrait. Beulah, to herself, called it "Success." It was the soul of her friend which she strove to make manifest in the clay.

This work became the ruling interest of the studio. Beulah, in her gratitude, carved a carnelian with Enid's initials, and had it set in a seal ring, for the child was fond of the dainty appurtenances of her writing-desk, and the personal quality of the gift delighted her beyond Beulah's fondest expectations. Enid amused herself by stamping the locked letters over and over with fanciful egotism. Never did she appear without it. It became almost a feature of the small, thin hand.

Beulah also bought casts and insisted that Enid should draw and model from the antique. When the other rebelled, she quoted Dumont's words to her — "There's no use trying to skip the early drudgery, you might as well attempt to build a house without a foundation." She was relentless and once, when Enid disputed the justice of a criticism, Beulah took the drawing to one of the masters at the school and brought it back covered with broad, suggestive lines, by way of

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correction, and signed with his initials. This mortified and convinced Enid, who the next week sent a drawing to the Institute, executed with such care that it came back with the word "good" scrawled on the margin.

"I have told Dumont about you," remarked Beulah one day, when the life in the studio had continued two months. "He will come up here sometime."

"It will be to see your work that he comes," answered Enid.

"Not entirely, for he says you have unusual talent. But you must follow what he says."

By these and similar words she spurred Enid on.

Henry Rahfield was an impediment to progress. He interfered, and made suggestions about his daughter's work, and waxed angry when she ignored them. He announced his theories, even when she modelled, and when they differed from those of the much-quoted Dumont he would paint away sullenly for hours.

At first his daughter tried to follow both him and the Institute masters, but, finding this impossible, she accepted the latter and tried a system of mental blindfold on her father. A painter's methods and a sculptor's were necessarily different. But Henry Rahfield was not deceived. Neither was he ignorant of the fact that Enid was making progress and was happier, and consequently stronger, than she had been for years. So he held his peace, which was a triumph of love over conceit. Men of his type live on their pride during a bleak season, much as a bear lives on his own

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fat. But with the poor artist, the winter of un-success had already lasted so long that he was gaunt for the food of recognition and could ill sustain the depleting of the internal supply. He became a pathetic imitation of himself. Though he still studied sky effects from the windows, and painfully arranged compositions and painted for hours, all hope had gone out of him. Even his daughter, spirit of his spirit, as she was bone of his bone, denied his art. The velvet cap on the back of his head was worn with a difference, and his clothes might have belonged to any one.

The girls saw this. Beulah with quick sympathy, Enid unwillingly and at last with keen self-reproach. She tried to reassure him by seeking his advice. But Henry Rahfield, though as a father he was as tender towards her as ever, as an artist withdrew into the isolation possible only to such natures as his. Beulah did not attempt to placate him. Without trying to explain the cause, she knew that he disliked her. It was the dislike of weakness for strength, of inefficient manhood for commanding womanhood, of unsuccessful maturity for the promise of youth; and yet his feeling, had his years been as few as hers, would assuredly have been worship. At twenty-five, Henry Rahfield would have loved Beulah Marcel to the point of self-immolating devotion; at forty-five, he could only coldly tolerate her.

Though he said nothing about the dust and disorder which her work necessarily occasioned in the studio,

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Beulah knew that it annoyed him, and she only felt herself in part excused when Dumont came, and after praising the figure of "Success" turned to the younger girl and encouraged her in terms as flattering. "I am proud of you both," he ended by saying.

Then, for the first time, Henry Rahfield spoke in praise of Beulah's work.

And there appeared another visitor at the studio whose calls became more and more frequent. Scarcely a day went by that Richard Yates did not drop in to help Beulah wrap up her work. Then afterwards these three had tea together, for Henry Rahfield always disappeared before so much light-heartedness, like a man of ice before a shower of roses. He thought of himself thus, in his impenetrable reserve, but sometimes the tears ran down his cheeks, revealing a warm spot somewhere.

Often he stopped on the first landing to wipe his eyes; art had been for him a will o' the wisp which he had followed over the marshes of his life, until now he was lost in the mire, but she still gleamed just as enticingly before him, a near that was far and for him meant — never. It always was some minutes before he could continue down the stairs. Adelaide West, the typewriter, might see him, or still worse, he might encounter the musician who lived at the top of the second flight. To hear this young woman play, Enid and Beulah often haunted the halls for hours, but Henry Rahfield slipped by the door hastily. She had

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a marvellous instrument, and the minor chords which she sometimes struck on it were like the chords of his life. It was as if he feared to wake his own note.

Down in the lower hall there was Flannigan, the fencing-master, who might be encountered, and out on the walk Gaston Marcel, or the young publishers of socialistic literature, who shared the basement with him. The building resounded with the songs of the singers — songs so various: of shoes, and public addresses, and the trembling of stretched strings, songs of the click of keys, of the strength of muscle, of pictures and statues. But his song was sung. He alone was silent and sought silence.

Richard always remained until dusk and then he and Beulah sometimes went to church. "I go to please my mother," he explained. "There's a look on her face like lights on an altar. She herself," he added with fervent embarrassment, "is religion enough for any man. I go to church because I cannot go to her."

Beulah conceived a deep liking for Richard. He was away from home, and though he was almost three years older than she was, there was a maternal quality in her feeling for him. He was a tall, broad-shouldered young man, with a fine and goodly strength of arm. The mark of talent was on his brow. Beulah was so far from being what she would be at maturity, that she was, in this sense, uncrowned, though the slight pucker in the right temple held the chief jewel — concentration; but the fuller perception that would wake her

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face from the thoughtful to the essentially artistic was yet to come. Enid and Richard, however, both wore the diadem of gift early. On Enid's white forehead the band was as clear as on Raphael's, passing under and rising to a point between the divine fulness of the temples. Child as she was, you could no more have doubted her genius than his.

On one occasion Enid accompanied them to church. It was Richard who asked her. He did not know of her weak back, which, while it permitted her to descend stairs with comparative ease, made the upward climb a torture. She consented unhesitatingly. You would have thought there was no such affliction as a weak back in the world. She was all gaiety, and on their return bade them good night proudly at the street door. Beulah looked after her. "She oughtn't to climb all those stairs."

Richard hurried into the hall. "Why didn't you tell me before?" he said.

He came upon the younger girl seated at the bottom of the second flight, — but at the sound of his step she rose and continued the ascent with what rapidity she could. Richard, however, was stupid: "These stairs are infernally steep," he cried, springing after her. And before she knew what he was about, with a laughing apology, he had lifted and was carrying her as if she had been an infant.

The little figure struggled and grew tense. "Set me down," she said thickly.

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But he could not see her face and strode on with her, like a centaur bearing a nymph. When he put her down, Enid thanked him and closed the door. "She couldn't possibly have gotten up alone," he explained. "She was deathly pale." But Beulah understood. Enid, in fact, had dropped on the floor in a little heap. "I hate him — hate him," she sobbed.

It was fully six months after Beulah had commenced the figure of Enid before it was finished. Then she invited Matthias Howe to come to see it. He stood before it with hands tightly clasped. He walked around it, and then stood still again. Ordinarily voluble, he had not a word to say: unless the hand-clasp which he gave his apprentice can be counted a word, the tear in the corner of his eye another, and his very silence a volume — which it was. Matthias was so touched that he could scarcely find his way back to the old church. He moved stiffly, like a piece of its architecture gone a-wandering and seeking by instinct its accustomed place. "Talent!" he muttered, "Genius! Divine inspiration!" These words were like a refrain and he marched to them. Yet a duty lurked just beyond his delight, and at this he steadfastly refused to look. Giovanni had opposed the idea of her going to the Institute. He would go and tell him what progress she was making. Matthias did not say *had* made. He refused to admit, even to himself, what the next step ought to be.

His eloquence fermented like new wine, and his

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description of the work was such that the Italian was fired with a desire to see it.

"You ask me what the figure is," he cried. "It is the portrait of her friend as she looked when she declared her intention of becoming a sculptor, so Miss Marcel said. The friend too is gifted, I understand. I did not see her to-day. But she is represented holding a globe, and smiling out at you, O God, with such a look! It is as if she could push the whole universe over with one touch of her little finger. The effect is marvellous, for the girl is almost as slim and unformed as a half-grown child. Yet she has a strength and a fire like *Michael Angelo's* 'David', and something that can't be defined besides. Something more subtle that lurks in the narrowed eyes and on the lips. It is as if she had just received a kiss giving her divine strength. And when, now and again, you come back to the fact, as you do, that it is only the figure of a young girl you are looking at, you are amazed, dumbfounded, knocked all of a heap."

"I shall surely," remarked Giovanni, "go to see this wonderful statue."

But he never did, for the next morning the wonderful statue was no more.

It was summer again and the Rahfields, during the great heat, had gone to the seashore for Enid's health, Henry having had a bit of good fortune in disposing of a canvas. Beulah had not sufficient time to take the necessary care of the figure, the wrappings having to be

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wet now twice a day, and Richard Yates, in the enthusiasm of his friendship and his pride in her, gladly performed this service.

Coming early one morning, it was he who discovered the catastrophe. He entered the place whistling, and came down with a whitish ring around the lips. As if led by some divining instinct, Beulah that morning, before going to work, had decided to stop a moment at the studio. Richard met her in the first hall.

"Don't go up," he cried, barring the way.

"Has something happened to Enid?" she exclaimed.

"No, thank heaven, she isn't here in this heat. It isn't so bad as that."

"Is — is it the work then?" whispered the other. Her voice sounded like a mother's asking after the safety of her child.

Richard nodded. He would have supported her, but without a syllable she darted past him up the stairs. Her flying steps struck on his heart more tragically than any lament, and it was some minutes before he could force himself to follow her. An absolute devotion blots out the individual, and his face, when he opened the door, was not merely his own. It was the face of sympathy. Beulah felt this and moved ever so slightly. She was sitting before the ruin.

There it was, a mangled heap; the figure distorted and writhing in an awful pain, the wings crushed, but with the face alone unmarred, and still smiling inscrutably.

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Later, astonishment, sharp disappointment, and grief would come to the artist, but now she was simply lethargic. She looked inert, like a worshipper before a fallen idol.

Richard stumped around the wreck. "A weak place in the armature — a little lack of balance was enough." His voice sounded angry, he had to struggle so to keep back the tears. He picked up a piece of the shattered drapery and stood staring at it, but suddenly he gave a great start and glanced fearfully at Beulah, but she had not noticed, and he broke off a small part and, unobserved, dropped it in his pocket.

He stayed some time, continuing his examinations, and now and then an oath escaped, while the odd uncertain look grew in his face. At some moments he seemed on the point of making a communication, but a glance at her checked the words, and after hovering over her, wretched and silent, in the delicacy of his compassion, he withdrew, leaving her alone with that squash mass of clay from which a twisted piece of lead pipe writhed like a viper.

She had worked too much, hoped too much, the drill had gone too deep. Her dream, like a cameo, was shattered. To this end, this, she had reared her statue to "Success," and the poor young artist burst into a laugh, but it was a laugh that was sadder than tears.

Across the way, the beggar was eating again.

CHAPTER V

THE GOLDEN AGE

SHAME is often a lash which forces the conscience to speech, but sympathy is a gentle turnkey, letting the confession out before we are aware. When Matthias Howe heard of the misfortune which had befallen his young apprentice, the words which he had been keeping back for two months leapt forth. He came and stood before her, his face working and twisting until there were gutters for the tears which he managed to retain.

"You must cut no more cameos for me," he said.

Beulah paled.

Matthias made an excited movement. "It is because I have hesitated to injure my business that I have not told you before," he cried; "but it is not right for me to keep you here, when all the time that master of yours at the school recommends that you go to Paris, and, by a word, I can get you the chance."

"But the expense?" murmured the girl. Her face, however, had lighted up as though a lamp had been placed behind it.

"How much have you saved?" he demanded.

"Only two hundred and seventy-five dollars."

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"Good. That gives you two hundred to spare, for your passage, second class, will cost no more than fifty, to which we will add twenty-five dollars for the other travelling expenses, though they will not come to that much. Then I have a friend in Paris, a dealer in precious stones, who will take all the cameos you cut, when I write him. He has already had through me a little of your work and knows what it is. So there you are, with part of the day, at least, left free for study at the schools."

And this revelation was no sooner made than another avenue to progress was opened, which, however, slightly delayed the European trip. John Thayer, bursting with importance and the kindness which the discoverer always feels for the discovered — for in this light he looked upon himself — brought her her first commission. His wife's uncle, who lived in Bluffton, Illinois, had requested him to secure a sculptor who would make a bust for the townspeople of their late mayor. The choice of the artist they left to him. "So, of course," he concluded, "as you are the instructor of my children, and your ability is beyond question, I come to you."

Her ability! Proved by her patient touching up of Mary's grimy drawings, and the pinching of Teddie's clay dogs and cats into some semblance of the real animals! But every man must use for measurement the linear rule of his own understanding.

John Thayer had never met, and never would meet, the artist to whom he gave this commission, though he

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was destined to become better acquainted with a girl who explained to him earnestly that four hundred dollars was a very small amount for a marble bust, and later with a perplexed young woman who besought him to write to the commissioners in Bluffton and ask that she be allowed to substitute, as covering for the Mayor's shoulders, a coat for the Roman toga they desired; which request, by the way, was firmly refused. The spirit, however, that suffered and wept and exulted and despaired, he never met. The ego of Beulah Marcel was locked away behind a door of which John Thayer could never have the key.

The commission served as a bark which launched her on a sea of practical difficulties. The marble-cutter could not take a cent less than one hundred and fifty dollars, and then there was the casting, besides twenty-five dollars a month for the studio. A letter from Henry Rahfield decided her to take the great roomy place during his absence. Enid had grown suddenly and unaccountably worse and an operation was necessary, therefore if he could rent the studio for three months he should be glad. Between the lines of his letter Beulah saw the poverty and the pitiful anxiety that compelled it, and, thankful to be of service, she wrote to take the studio off his hands.

Enid had been getting more and more impatient because of the time she was losing from her work, Henry wrote. She talked of nothing else; and this, in his opinion, was the cause of her condition, though the

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doctors attributed it to a long walk she had taken the day before, when she had been absent from the hotel several hours. Curiously enough, Beulah noted, her collapse dated from the downfall of the statue. Could it be, she asked herself, that sensitively organized as her friend was, she had received a telepathic communication of the catastrophe?

She asked Richard's opinion on this point, and the young fellow looked closely for a moment into her upturned tearful eyes, his lips twitching at if some word fought for utterance, then he turned abruptly on his heel. "Oh, she *knows* about it all right," he said in a repressed voice. "You can set your mind at rest on that score. Anyhow, I've written her father about it," he called back over his shoulder. He seemed curiously excited, almost angry. Beulah gazed after him in amazement. She thought him unfeeling.

She waited in a suspense that chained every faculty, and a few days later a scrawl from the invalid herself, set her fears at rest. Alluding to the accident, Enid was almost defiant, as if she feared the effect of sympathy and wished, rather, to prick Beulah to future effort. "I'm as prone as your clay figure," she wrote, "but when the statue and I find our feet again, we'll both have better backbones; that's all. Don't you dare to be discouraged. Just think of me, watering my pillow with my tears as if it were a flower-garden, I'm so wild to be at work. But never mind, when I return we'll start together, each on a new piece, and I'll

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pose for you like an angel." And the rest of the note was filled with enthusiastic congratulations. The Roman toga in which the Mayor was to be draped moved Enid to merriment, but, in spite of it, she had no fear for the result. Beulah's art, she declared, was strong enough to triumph over such details.

Relieved, encouraged, and deeply comforted, Beulah began the bust. At first, the days spent in the studio were as rhythmical as the measures of a simple tune. Rising at six, she started work at seven. Her first move was always to examine the pictures she had of the Mayor. These were a collection of daguerreotypes, tintypes, and violently retouched photographs, representing him at various ages from twenty-five to seventy-five. An old man, shamelessly deprived of his wrinkles, he had an inane, no-age look. These "likenesses" showed him in the periods of his greatest strength, and in the days when weakness had fastened itself upon him. They showed him clean-faced, and bearded like a Moses, with the close-cropped head of a priest, and with a flowing mane, and, in all, there was but one feature in common, the eyes. These were honest in expression and resolute, with a spark — a star on the iris, so that it seemed that the real kindness in his heart shone up through a chink, as a ray of light is poured out through a casement in the stern front of a building, rendering it friendly.

Beulah took hope from these eyes. They elucidated for her the text-book of the Mayor's face. As she

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worked she grew to have a certain fondness for him, as for a living person. Were her fingers not striving to reproduce that forehead, that nose, that chin, fashioned by the Creator, and to hint at the spirit which he had breathed into this man even as he had breathed it into the first?

She searched closely for the slight hollows, the delicate contours which make a face, even employing a microscope. And when the pictures offered to her only the untrue blur of the photographer's art, she discarded them altogether. And, closing her eyes, she called up a picture of the Mayor as he had come to exist in her imagination. Then the large forms, the projections, the hollows assumed their proper relations, and she saw him — with that strange gift of the artist — clearly, fleetingly, for the fraction of an instant. But sometimes he would elude her. And then she would stop to eat the meal which her father or her mother brought up to her, and Elizabeth would coax her down into the garden to play with Louis.

Elizabeth Marcel was fitted by nature to be the guardian angel of an artist. Without comprehending art, she possessed the understanding of love. When Beulah was not getting on, she knew it, not by the work but by the dispirited look in the girl's face, and, having enticed her down into the garden, she would send Louis out to play with her. And Louis was always a tonic. He was like a goblet of wine for the spirit, an ambulatory blossom with his bright cheeks

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and hair, his arms gesticulating like the leaves in a breeze. He was like a little planet — a sun, giving light and warmth to the dulness in his sister's heart. Often she would stand straight and he would climb her as if she had been a tree, to sit enthroned on her shoulder and embrace her head in a gust of wild childish love, until her hair fell down in a thick mass and blinded them both and choked their laughter.

Or, if school were over, Elizabeth sent Jules out to read to his sister and put her to sleep where she sat, tired and inanimate, on a bench. And always her eyes shone on the girl, lighting her to rest and relaxation and naturalness of mind. Sometimes when Beulah glanced up and perceived her mother looking at her thus over the shoe she was finishing, and, perhaps, Gaston peering across her shoulder — suggesting Joseph and Mary with the little one at their knees — a love for her family, which was almost reverence, filled her so that the tears rolled down her cheeks, lightening the pressure in her brain and freshening her heart, as a spring brook is freshened by an overflow.

But later there came other days. The toga in which she draped the Mayor had for her a spiritual counterpart as painful as the garment of a martyr. To make the hated folds inconspicuous and to have the great leonine head triumph over them, she was forced finally to a bold experiment. The chords of the great throat, like vines grown to a tree-trunk, took their root in a deep, brawny chest — and this chest she allowed to be

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as evident through the drapery as the rugged contours of a field through a fall of snow. Forced from the period in which he had lived, into a more classic one, the Mayor should have something besides its frippery to distinguish him. He should be as a Homer or a Cæsar in marble, his great strength displayed as boldly as a woman's beauty. Beulah had never seen the bust of Jean Paul Laurens in the Luxembourg, but, like Rodin, she set on a modern portrait the seal of no particular age — of all ages. The bust might as fitly have borne the inscription "Adam in his ripe years" as the name of the Mayor of Bluffton.

But even after she had subjugated the folds, they continued to be a source of anxiety to her.

"It's jolly. It's as swell as an antique. But it'll shock the natives."

Olive Lanham stood before the bust, admiring it with the hearty good-will of a student who does strong work herself. She was a girl with a face so clever that it was pretty. The eyes were not set into the countenance, but rather had an appearance of being sewn upon it like beads, decorating it with their twinkle — a twinkle so intelligent as in a measure to offset the deep colour of the cheeks, which she carried with an undulatory motion, as a bough carries two ripe apples. However, certain of the physical charms of this young woman were so little influenced by her mental qualities as to appear almost vegetable. The complete fusion of the two natures had never taken place, so that she

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attracted two separate classes of people. In these, her student days, her intellect held supremacy and she was a member of an eager artistic circle.

Now she turned towards Beulah and laughed at her dismayed countenance. "But let them shock," she cried. "What do you care? This bust is enough to send your name down to posterity."

"But what if they should refuse to accept it?" asked the other.

"Then get Dumont to state his opinion of it, and make the people of Bluffton ridiculous through the papers."

When will science compound for the sculptor a substance that shall be as pliant to his touch as clay, and yet shall change at his command and become as hard as marble, that shall preserve every tender touch of his, the most subtle form as well as the boldest, without expansion or contraction? — that shall save him, in brief, the agonies of seeing his work translated into the different language of plaster, and thence into stone or bronze, losing by every process infinitesimally — but still losing? The pointing-machine and the alien workman with his chisel, the foundry and the oven, are the necessary agents that stand between the artist and the finished production. The cry of his soul that passes into the wax or the clay is heard as an echo, merely, in the bronze or the marble.

At the end of the third month Beulah had the bust

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cast, and was so chilled by the blue-whiteness of the plaster that she would have coloured it to a warmer tone before it left her hands, had not an incident occurred that made her hasten to send it to the marble-cutter. Her bills by this time had mounted up so alarmingly that she besought John Thayer to ask the commissioners to increase the amount, only to receive the reply that no more money could be raised. Moved by her distress, however, they suggested as a means of lessening the expense, that she intrust the cutting to a maker of tombstones in Bluffton, who would do the work for seventy-five dollars.

That same night the bust went to the New York marble-cutter, and the young artist retired to dream frightfully of a tombstone man who promised to have the whole thing done in five days.

But the weeks of doubt and fear at last came to an end. The editor of the *Bluffton Eagle* sent her the necessary railroad ticket, and she was present at the final exquisite torture — the placing and the unveiling. When the covering was lifted, her whole sense was concentrated in one sense — hearing. And when it reached her — that low indefinite murmur which grew louder and louder and finally broke upon her in a wave of applause — she raised her eyes and cast them towards the work — one glance that changed from untold suspense to untold relief. The lighting, which she had doubted, was right; among the furnishings of the platform the bust held its place — its eyes beamed

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upon her, its bearded lips spoke to her. A communication passed from the work to the artist. The marble spoke with a voice that thundered above the shouts of the people. The message was "Well done!"

What first love is to the heart, first achievement is to the mind — the golden age. But it must ever be the first love — the first achievement. Later our happinesses may stretch to the mortal limit, but only once can we know that proud sense of power — that divine egotism — that joy of the gods, that foresees in the future neither failure nor the satiety of success — that takes no note of the stretches of darkness because of the stars that still beckon us on.

CHAPTER VI

THE WIDOW OF THE BONES

"What if I do agree with you that she is not advanced enough to do a figure," and Beulah looked up at Richard Yates with fine impatience. "She's been counting on it during her whole illness and she helped me."

Richard frowned. "Helped you, did she?" he muttered ironically. "I tell you, Beulah," he went on with passion, "you're dead wrong about Enid. You're mad to trust her as you do. And you'll find it out some day," he concluded, shrinking a little under the fire of her glance.

Of late he had steadily avoided Enid, and any mention of her was apt to render him either restless or taciturn. And this attitude Beulah set down to a jealousy which she treated with scorn.

Now his annoyance at the slight delay in her own plans seemed to her ridiculous. But in the end he grudgingly promised silence.

"I suppose you're happier caring for her, this way?" he hazarded. "You couldn't, for instance, get along without her?"

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"I couldn't and wouldn't," cried Beulah, sharply. And besides, why should I?"

At which, Richard shrugged his shoulders, and the matter was dropped.

Matthias Howe, when she told him of the deferred European project, was too greatly benefited by the delay to press for an explanation. She doubtless had good reasons for waiting.

As for Enid, she never questioned that the fifteen dollars she had earned in the hospital making portrait reliefs of the patients in her ward would be sufficient to cover the expense of the proposed work. "The figure will be no more than sixteen inches high," she explained, "and papa can cast it; he cast my reliefs. And I shall not need a model more than five or six times." But Beulah was wiser.

In vain Enid besought her to do a second "Success," for which she promised eagerly to pose. Beulah shook her head and Enid grew indignant and tearful by turns. Ignorant of the Paris plan, she had set her heart on their both doing figures, and she could see no reason for Beulah's refusal. She became fairly angry and, had it been in her power, would have forced the other to comply with her wish. But the amount Beulah had set aside as necessary to establish her in Paris had been neither increased nor diminished by the commission, and she would not imperil it by commencing another piece of work, though she gladly assumed the expense of Enid's by returning to the lathe; but this she could

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not explain. In truth, the other's anger filled her with secret happiness. Did it not prove Enid's devotion?

The delay and the additional labour became for Beulah one of those sacrifices which are the delight of all true friendship, and she contrived to supply Enid's needs with such quietness and unostentation that the other never considered the matter at all. Indeed, after the first week, Enid thought of nothing but the work. She had unhesitatingly selected the old beggar across the street as the model for the figure.

"I've been studying her from a distance," she explained, "and she's a volume of wickedness. Get her for me, Beulah. She won't come as high as regular models, anyway, for she won't know the prices."

In this, however, she was mistaken. "The Widow of the Bones" as Enid christened her on hearing her story, obtained this information before the first sitting and asked fifty cents an hour, and this, despite the fact that her posing could not have been worse.

The climbing of so many stairs, she contended, was bad for so old a woman as she, and the first hour was always spent in recuperating. She took snuff and drank freely from the black bottle that she produced from the lining of her dress, which was set with pockets. She rubbed herself to the accompaniment of groans and grunts, and as she grew weary she thought nothing of abandoning the pose. When in a semi-intoxicated state (and this was her normal condition) she was possessed by the fear that a purchaser would arrive and

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carry off the carcass of her spouse without her knowledge. She dashed to the window fifty times a day until Enid was forced to put Louis on the lookout. But the child, considering it a game, did not improve the situation greatly.

A boy had only to hesitate before the basement of the manufacturer of instruments (Duncan by name) than he summoned the beggar to the window with a lusty shriek, while his chubby finger pointed out, perhaps a barefooted urchin rooted by curiosity in front of the bones, or a tremulous old man, gaping at them — his dropped chin and watery eye indicating those minute, almost unconscious calculations that make an old face resemble a sun-dial.

And when it was not an old man or a boy, it was quite likely to be a woman that Louis pointed out.

"But doctors are men," expostulated Enid.

The model, however, shook her head. "Don't be foolin' yourself," she interposed. "There be plenty of females as do doctorin'. Unnatural critters! They are the sort that would be after carryin' off Jube, and laughin' at the tears of the rightful widdy. Ugly mugs, every one, that never 'ad no 'usbands of their own and consequent 'ave no feelin's. Why, my affections," she continued, "twine theirselves around them bones like a vine on a trillis. So do you keep watch, 'uneey," she instructed him, "and sing out if you see one of them kind comin'. It won't be the first time I've shooed women off'n Jube's tracks. 'E were a powerful 'and-

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some man, as you can see by 'is bones bein' so unusual big."

A strange group now animated the Rahfield studio. Henry, lost behind a great easel, painted disgustedly on his canvas. He was doing a still-life piece — a collection of pots and kettles and a string of fish. When he complained of the fumes of the model's whisky, his daughter decried the odour of the fish.

"They are both out of their element," she explained to Beulah. "The widow never earned an honest penny before in her life. She fairly gasps with virtue, so that sometimes I have to recall her native propensities by thrusting her back into the water, as you might say, or she would expire altogether."

Enid's way of bringing animation to the model's countenance — for after the novelty of the situation passed she seemed inclined to tipsy slumbers — was to encourage conversation on the all-important subject of the money which Government, having deprived her of her natural support, ought to give her, — and her other wrongs.

The widow had a deep-rooted aversion to the blind woman whose station was further down the fence, and who, she claimed, had injured her "business." One day, observing that her companion had moved her seat somewhat nearer the gate of the college and consequently was in the direct path of the lads as they entered and came out, trespassing on what the widow considered her territory, she first called from the window

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of the studio, and, failing to make the other hear, she scuttled downstairs and across the street, Enid eagerly accompanying her.

While she shook her fist at the other and drove her back to her accustomed station with the foulest abuse, Enid never moved her eyes from the model's countenance. Indeed, a passion for the study of this old witch animated the young girl. To bring the light of covetousness to the widow's face, she herself sometimes went to the window, pretending that she saw a physician with his eyes on the bones. But, after a little, even this device ceased to be effective, for the model, a great part of the time, was abandoned to drunken dreams.

"I won't have her here," Henry Rahfield stormed. "If you wished to do a crone, why you couldn't have chosen the other one, who at least has some claim to respectability, I can't see."

"But I didn't want a respectable old woman," his daughter retorted. "This one is a perfect genius of wickedness." And then she knelt beside Louis and looked out into the street until the model could be induced to take the pose again.

The girl, her heart swelling with the impatient resentment we all feel when we are not understood, the weary little sentinel, pointing out horses in the street below and asking the questions that only childhood can invent, Henry Rahfield, his paternal authority set aside, painting in his corner, and the model, sagging and nodding

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on the throne, presented those contrasts of human emotion seen sometimes upon the stage, when, for the moment, each actor is engaged with his own asides — his explanation to the audience. At such moments, to change the figure, our heads are theatres and we hear only the applause or sighs awakened by our own dramas.

Beulah was now able to make return for the encouragement that Enid had given her during her apprenticeship to James Wooding. She comprehended Enid's idea fully, and watched, as the young girl, by methods all her own, accomplished her aim — that of making a study of a being who was the very antithesis of youth and beauty and virtue.

The elemental characteristics of each individual at birth — innocence, sex, and a certain playfulness — in her were subverted. She was corrupt and low-minded, her very femininity had taken on masculine attributes, and whiskers sprouted from her chin. Age, testifying to the storms and heats and frosts of her existence, had shrivelled her, so that she resembled nothing so much as a wrinkled leaf: a leaf, that, while it waits the wind of death, dances at the end of a stem, consumed with diabolical merriment. It was this playfulness of the babe, become evil mockery in the old woman, that Enid had the most difficulty in reproducing. A passion, given exclusive play, is as discernible on some faces as a ray of light. At a well-chosen word or reference we can almost hear a crackling, and

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then we see a flame leap, and all the secrets of that countenance are in evidence. Enid called her sketch "The Beldame," and it was this wicked humour, this laughter at the world, that justified the title.

She worked with such rapidity to get the spirit of the study, that she was constantly getting the figure out of construction, and Beulah, after calling her attention to the fact with small result, rectified the defect with extreme care. In her spare moments she plumbed the figure and took the measurements, in regard to which Enid was all too careless, and the young girl, while exhibiting an excited solicitude for the feeling of the work — which Beulah was sometimes obliged to sacrifice, — grew to accept her alterations approvingly and finally to think of them as a mechanical service which could be performed by any one with a true eye. In fact, neither realized how much the elder was doing for the figure. With Beulah, this correcting of the work was merely another expression of her devotion to her friend — an unmeasured devotion that made her look upon Enid's needs as if they had been her own.

Perceiving that the younger girl must lack the delicacies to which she had become accustomed at the hospital and which her increasing strength required, she added to the poor fare of the father and daughter many articles of diet of a more nourishing nature, employing such stratagem as she could — but when she observed that Henry Rahfield avoided touching any-

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thing that she had brought and observed the look in the poor artist's eyes, she invited Enid to dine with her own family, or, on the pretext of change and amusement for herself, bore her off to this restaurant and that where the food was wholesome. When a day passed in which the "Widow of the Bones" failed to appear at the studio, Beulah went in search of her and brought the recalcitrant model to a sense of her duty.

She became, in fact, an additional brain, an additional pair of hands and feet to Enid. And if the giving of these services was involuntary and unreckoned, the reception was the same. With the carelessness which is characteristic of the artistic temperament, Enid, after the first, paid small heed to the practical details connected with the work, every force being concentrated on the work itself, and, with eager delight, Beulah watched the development of the other's genius.

Had Beulah been, like Balzac's Auvergne water-carrier, inferior in possibility to Enid, this devotion would not have been so unusual, but that a nature, richly gifted, should submerge its gifts in those of another denoted a love most rare. In general, the hold of a miser on his gold cannot be compared in tenacity with the hold of a mind over the least ray of genius which is its own.

As the sketch grew in character, the model seemed to lose the attributes which had at first recommended her to Enid. Relieved from the necessity of being constantly on the lookout for charitable pedestrians,

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and with her daily wants assured, the widow was in fact, as the artist complained, losing her colours.

One day, when in default of being able to do anything else, Enid was working on the folds of the dress, and determining that, at any cost, into the sketch must be breathed that final inspiration which would give it life, a certain impulse carried her to the window where Louis was asleep. Looking down the street, she beheld what, indeed, might be taken for a doctor's trap. Hitherto, she had doubted the possibility of singling out a customer, should one appear, and, granting that this young man was a customer rather than a messenger from one of the hospitals or a policeman in quest of a stretcher, why suppose it was the skeleton he desired to purchase? Smiling a little scornfully at herself, she awakened Louis.

"Louis," she breathed into his ear, "listen to me. A doctor has just gone into Duncan's. We think he has come to buy something else, still if he should be talking to Mr. Duncan about the bones —" but the child was away before she finished. "In which event her face would be worth studying," she added to herself, as she heard the boy's sturdy little heels on the stair. She had once more become absorbed in the folds, when Louis returned. He burst into the studio like a rocket, his eyes sparkling.

"'Tis," he cried, "he's a-buying 'em! You'll have to hurry," he cried, seizing one of the dangling arms of the model, who, however, allowed herself to be shaken

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from side to side, like a bag of meal, her head dropping over on her shoulders. "Le'm' lone," she muttered, "I ain't doin' no 'arm."

Enid bent over her. "Jube," she cried, "is being sold. The bones are being sold!"

The effect was electrical. The creature was awake and sobered instantly. The veil which drunkenness had cast over her face disappeared. She almost fell from the model throne and scuttled out of the studio and down the stairs, as though propelled by some mechanism that had hitherto refused to act. Her lameness disappeared and her joints regained the limberness of youth, so that Louis and Enid, who were following, were outdistanced. An excited dog, belonging to the musician, ran out upon the second landing and added his small barking body to the procession, which faintly resembled the flight of the Pied Piper of Hamelin.

Enid, determined to be upon the scene when the "Widow of the Bones" presented her plea, entered the basement breathlessly a moment after the model, only to be recalled by Louis. "Wait!" he screamed at the top of his childish lungs, and he entered, sobbing in a way that threatened the whole enterprise and sent Enid down on her knees to comfort him. Then, while apparently waiting to see the proprietor, she watched the manœuvres of the model. The customer was a young man with a sandy complexion and stern blue eyes. He did not look like one who could be easily

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moved, and Enid saw that the old woman, while she waited for the sale to be safely concluded, was estimating his probable compassion. At the exact moment, when the price was agreed upon, she sidled up to the pair.

"You're gettin 'em cheap," she remarked lugubriously. "'Tain't often you see bones as big as them, for Jube were the next thing to a giant. 'E were my 'usband," she added pathetically, feeling for her handkerchief, in default of which she wiped her eyes on the corner of her veil.

"Your husband!" repeated the young man, and then he burst into a loud contemptuous laugh, in which he was joined by Duncan.

"Yes, and a good 'usband 'e were, too," she insisted, and then she launched into her accustomed plea, to which, however, as Enid had expected, after his first amazement, the young doctor turned a deaf ear. In vain she approached him and the scene seemed likely to be a brief one, when, turning to pay Duncan, the purchaser caught sight of Enid. The young girl nodded eagerly towards the beggar.

In describing the incident to Beulah that evening, Enid was filled with laughing triumph and excitement. "It was as ludicrous and exaggerated as a scene from Dickens," she cried, "and yet, Beulah, the fellow actually responded. He must have thought me crazy, but he offered just as I motioned him to. And, oh, Beulah, you should have seen the old hag's face! Tears

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rolled down her cheeks in rivers, she held out supplicating hands, her poor gray locks became unloosened, but the depths of her eyes just gloated. The expression was all that I ever dreamed of. And so, for a minute or two, we played this game, the strange doctor and I, with a failing marked upon a human countenance. I'm sure I don't know what he thought of me," she added, with a pretty shake of the head, "probably that I was demented, though I explained afterwards, when I paid him, that I was making a study of the old wretch. But I can't help what he thought. All I know is, that I got what I wanted. Look!" And with a quick movement she flung back the cloth that covered the figure.

There it was. It fairly breathed the spirit of the old wretch. In the eyes covetousness glowed like a fire. The wrinkles of the face seemed like the closed talons of a claw, the sunken mouth and sharp protruding chin seemed to shut in a secret over which the whole creature gloated. The breasts, flat and dependent, told of the press of money bags, the shape of which they suggested. If this female Caliban had ever had a child, you felt that she would have sold it for what it would bring in money, in drink, in pleasures. Every wrinkle of her dress bespoke a devilish device. She was all openness and yet all concealment. She was at once the means and the end of Vice. She was Vice incarnate. As the title of a book heads its every page, so upon every feature, every

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outline, every garment of this Jezebel, was stamped *The Beldame*.

And this ability to obtain, in extravagant ways, if necessary, what she sought in her art, became with Enid a habit. She courted the unusual and delighted in proving the practicability of apparently fantastic methods.

Two months after its conception, the figure went to the Society of American Artists. Dumont urged this, and, at his suggestion, it was cast in bronze, Beulah assuming this expense as she had assumed the rest. It meant a little longer at the lathe, a little conniving with Henry Rahfield that the money might appear to come from him; but was not her anticipation as keen as Enid's? And whatever sacrifices she made were more than repaid on the first night of the exhibition.

If Enid passed once before the statuette, casting a quick glance at it of veiled pride and delight, Beulah stood before it openly, in an emotion so great that it triumphed over the usual restraint of her manner. Her cheeks were stained with tears and her eyes shone. She was undergoing those throes which with some natures accompany the expression of any deep feeling upon the countenance and which can only be denominated a species of birth-throe, by which the soul fully reveals itself. The countenances of such people, often denoting an immaturity and lack of feeling at variance with their years, are changed and intensified by such moments, until at last the face becomes the true index

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of the character. Now Beulah wept before Enid's work.

Again, if Enid walked in a dream of delight, which fairly illuminated her, veil her eyes as she would, if a subtle light glowed through her skin and informed the very tendrils of her hair, Beulah accompanied her, consumed with even a higher joy.

Absorbed as they were, therefore, the grumblings of Matthias Howe did not reach this pair in the clouds until late in the evening. But the younger girl's success aroused in the breast of the cameo-cutter a jealousy for his pupil. He waylaid Richard Yates. "Can you tell me," he demanded with some asperity, "why Beulah Marcel isn't exhibiting?"

The young man shook his head, though it was quite evident that he shared the feeling. In fact, at the question, an ominous look leaped into his eyes. On the pretext of examining some picture, he broke away, and Matthias took his question to Enid — for Beulah, reading his dissatisfaction, kept out of his path.

The younger girl faced him abruptly. "Why not indeed?" she repeated with spirit. "I tried my very best to get her to do a figure when I did. But she wouldn't. And I have never forgiven her because she wouldn't," she added. A troubled expression had crept into her face, and she glanced away.

"Then," grumbled Matthias, "as long as she isn't accomplishing anything over here, why isn't she in

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Paris? She was going, but for some reason she's been putting it off these two months."

Wrapped in the interest of her own work, Enid had lived in darkness as far as the hopes of others were concerned. She had known neither Beulah's plans nor her sacrifice. But now the revelation came like a blinding flash, showing her own unconscious selfishness and bleaching the joy of her success, and the achievement, which a moment before had given her such unbounded pleasure, now that she knew it largely due to another, lost significance.

She dragged Beulah into a little side room where they could be alone, and mingled with her thanks this passionate accusation. "In short, you practically paid for everything," she finished, "for the casting, the bronze, the —"

Beulah drew herself up and looked at the little tense figure with sudden and complete surprise. Then the tears slowly rose. "Yes," she said, "it's true. But isn't your work worth it? Is it possible," she concluded, speaking with difficulty, "that you don't know, Enid, what this — this triumph means to me?" And suddenly her voice broke.

A wave of colour swept over Enid's face. She hesitated, then she took hold of the other's shoulders violently.

"Beulah!" she almost sobbed.

In vain the other, intoxicated by this novel mood, tried to silence her. Resisting the pride that usually

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controlled her, Enid repeated her thanks with hysterical insistence. "If I'm ever a great artist," she whispered, "it will be you who have made me."

And these words, with the impressive and haunting quality of the unexpected, entered, as it were, into Beulah's permanent estimate of her, so that the time never came when the memory of them was quite effaced.

CHAPTER VII

EXODUS

LIKE the face of a countess who has applied her powder and her rouge with a careless hand, the front of the building showed alternate patches of snow and red brick. It had once been a stable, but, at an expense that would have startled any but an American mind, had been converted into a studio. The little Florentine balcony, which defined a second story, was filled with snow, and snow fell across the threshold when the door was opened. A young Italian stood in the door, while a three-year-old Cupid, divested of all but his natural covering, peered around his leg.

"Is Miss Lanham in?" inquired the newcomer, who was no other than Beulah Marcel.

"Yes, but she is engaged," responded the young fellow in very elaborately pronounced English. "However, if you will enter" — and with a gesture he ushered her into the warm, glowing place.

On a carved oak table, the legs of which were brass griffins, attracting immediate attention, stood a Christmas tree, short and dumpy as a Dutch dwarf. This tree bore brilliant tinsel gewgaws; twin wax

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cherries on a wire stem — was there ever such fruit? — and gold and silver balls and cocky little candles, all of which caught and reflected the light from a great open fire. There were some baskets of holly on the floor, and some charming reliefs on the walls, one, by a great hand — no other than Saint Gaudens' "Stevenson," that gentle, tender rendering of genius by genius; — and next to this was a piece of real tapestry with a Della Robbia altar-piece hanging against it — the heads of the Mother and Infant yellow as flax, smiling from a background of blue. Two high-backed Gothic chairs, with their frayed coverings probably worn by the robes of prelates, suggested the restless service of the Roman Church. Over in a corner a mahogany sideboard bloomed with a strange variety of objects. There was a pair of enormous twisted green candlesticks from the Hague, an array of steins from Germany, some pottery from Thun, a brass lamp from Pompeii, and before the fire a leopard skin, whose glossy spots seemed to wink back at the blaze. The whole place breathed the luxury of art. Close to an enormous divan, covered with rugs, was drawn a tiny table, on which was a brass samovar and a coffee-cup. Bits of choice crockery sparkled through the glass of a corner cupboard, and on the mantel, which had been cleared of two Renaissance figures for the purpose, was a great heterogeneous mass of toys and fruit and candy, evidently placed there to be out of reach of the small model. It was to this enticing collection that the little

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one endeavoured to call Beulah's attention by the eloquent expression of his eyes and the gestures of his chubby arms, his lips, soft as rose petals, being too yielding as yet for speech.

When the visitor stepped to the desk to write across her card, he pattered after her, and clambered, with great agility, and by the aid of a carved settle, to a place beside the ink-well, kneeling pink and dimpled among the papers. But the young Italian picked him up and set him gravely half-way up the staircase, which he continued to ascend, paying no more heed to the fact that his course had been altered than would a little insect.

Beulah turned about. "It will not be necessary for her to come down," she said. "You can bring me her answer."

When he had gone, she noticed how perfectly the place expressed its owner.

The only child of wealthy parents, whose idol she was, Olive Lanham represented a type distinctly American. Living only a part of the time with her parents in a suburb of New York, she had, like a young man of fortune, a setting for her individual life and genius. Here she filled commissions which brought her in sums of money which she did not need; here she entertained her friends among the artists — and she numbered not a few names of note on her list; here she conducted charities — one of which was evidently in progress now. In short, here it was that she found

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scope for the development of one side of her vigorous personality. What she was in the social world, into which she took occasional plunges, could be gained now and then from the papers, that welcomed her appearance at a ball or reception with fulsome praises of her ambition and her talent. She had been buried alive, as she herself would have expressed it, some six months now, engaged on a large painting which completely absorbed her.

She appeared presently at the head of the stairs, with a foil and a fencing-mask in her hand. "Well, how do you do?" she cried joyously. "Come right up. You're just in time to help me solve a problem in physical arithmetic. How much ice-cream should you say could be consumed by twenty little rascals with stomachs the size of his?" — pointing to the cherub, who at that moment was following a belated fly, as it crawled over the floor, and trying to pick it up.

"I should think it would depend a good deal on what had preceded it," responded Beulah, laughing.

"Oh, well, let's say two gallons," cried the other, turning to the Italian. "You can order it when you go to lunch. Now throw me Antonio's little shift, and you can take him along. His mother won't be after him to-day. Beulah," she added rapidly, as a military-looking old gentleman entered the studio from a dressing-room, where he had been putting on his coat, "I want you to meet Monsieur Chauvin. Monsieur instructs me in the art of fencing," she exclaimed.

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The old gentleman smiled as he buttoned his gloves. "Madmoiselle eez a very apt pupil," he remarked.

When he had gone and the little model had been clothed and carried off by the young Italian, Olive drew Beulah downstairs. "No," she said, as the other hesitated, looking around the work-room. "My picture is in no condition to show, and as for the fountain of Agnolo's, he'd never forgive me if I uncovered it. I am letting him model here so that I can keep up my Italian, just as I practise my French on poor Monsieur Chauvin. But tell me about yourself," she cried, when they were seated side by side on the divan. "What is the meaning of this farewell feast, to which I cannot come as I have this children's party on my hands. Are you going abroad?"

The other nodded. "Yes," she said, "I'm off Thursday. And Mr. Howe, my employer, is determined to give a supper for me. He has been trying to pack me off these three months."

"Oh, how you will enjoy it," sighed Olive. "There's no place like Paris, unless it is Rome. Of course you will enroll at Julien's," and then followed a discussion of schools and masters, and, leaping into form in her imagination, Beulah beheld the wonderful French capital — that city whose map is sketched in every artist's heart.

Olive, possessing the gift of enthusiasm, could make a description graphic. Under her guidance, Beulah's fancy o'erleaped space. She saw the fluted columns

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of the Madeleine, and the Arc de Triomphe with the sun streaming under it, the two square towers of Nôtre Dame, like giant throats, pouring out praises to the sky. She knew how the tiles on the housetops blushed to the sun, and felt the gaiety of the crowded streets. But it was a gaiety almost ethereal, a colour never known on sea or land, bell tones never heard. The architecture which rose was as like the real as a dream is like the substance. It was the Paris of the heart — the fire of the wine.

When she rose to go she was drunk with the vision. Already the chords which bound her to the old life were loosening, and this feeling served to assuage the homesickness which had begun to steal upon her. Earlier in the day she had visited the old church, in the gallery of which Matthias was perched, verily like one of Giovanni's figures, and had laid her hand for a moment upon her lathe; she had gone over to Brooklyn and said good-by to her pupils, she had visited the Institute and felt the greatest wrench of all. But Olive was the link between the known and the unknown.

"You have done me so much good," she said feelingly, as she stepped out into the snow.

Olive laughed. These excited memories were to her eyes what the facets are to a gem — they intensified their brilliancy. You forgot the round red cheeks, the full, pleasure-loving mouth, all that wealth of purely physical charm, and beheld only the activity of her mind. At this moment she would have had less

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attraction for a man of warm passions than for a scholar. In her mere outward beauty were appreciable defects. Her hips and her shoulders were a shade too heavy, her arms too large, her movements too free. She had a buoyant swaying gait which showed every curve. But let the full power of her thoughts leap to her eyes, and you saw in them fascinating volumes of wit and humour and pathos — the story of human life as she had observed it. She seemed alert and capable to her mental finger-tips. Possessed of talent and wealth and urging ambition, she was the promise of success lapping closely on fulfilment. This thought formulated itself in Beulah's mind as she waved farewell from the street corner.

"There's no question about it," thought the other, "she'll win out."

When Beulah reached the studio, she found the place transformed. The singers' gallery in the church offering no facilities, Matthias had yielded to Enid's persuasions, and had consented to give the supper in the Rahfields' studio. The place was festooned with greens. Candles were set in all the odd nooks and corners, and a long table was formed by boards nailed to the model throne. This was covered with white and decorated with sprays of holly, the berries of which winked gaily from between the spiked leaves, like the love which modifies the edge of wit. The dishes were a heterogeneous collection, cheap fantastic plates, picked up here and there by Enid, pieced out with a stein or

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two and a wineglass brought by Matthias, which last were all the dishes the old man possessed, except his earthen plate and cup; and Madame Marcel had added a droll note of staidness with her gold and white tea-set, bestowing a plate here and a cup there, as it was needed, and in the centre of the table she had placed a candlestick inherited from her New England ancestors, which seemed to shed a glow of maternal love over the board.

Matthias, who had wished to rent the necessary crockery, was delighted. His white point of hair seemed to smile above his brow, the crinkles of his beard smiled, and his eyes. He was just going over with Enid the menu ordered from a neighbouring restaurant, when Beulah entered. But Jules, springing towards her, blindfolded her eyes and drew her out into the entry, and her mother ordered her mysteriously to go downstairs and dress.

The love of her parents, her family, her friends, surrounded the young artist. They were to her almost what the petals are to the heart of a flower. They closed around her, as it were, shielding and protecting her for the last time, before yielding to that invincible law which must cause them to fall away, leaving her soul free to fructify in the open glance of the world. She was a woman, and therefore her inmost soul contracted with an emotion which is not fear, though it resembles it, the emotion feminine, experienced at moments by the bravest, the most callous of her sex.

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It is as if there were in a woman's composition a highly sensitive plate, as in a camera, which records a variety of emotions unknown to a man. We see her flushing, paling, trembling, or, perhaps, if she be of sturdier type, she merely hesitates for the fraction of an instant. There is an almost imperceptible withdrawal of the soul, but in some way she betrays this shrinking at every point in her life. It is what constitutes her womanhood.

So Beulah looked younger and exhibited unexpected clinging qualities before them all that night. She kept her arms around little Louis, and occasionally her cheek sought his hair. She looked at tall, manly Jules through a mist, and more than once her hand sought her father's or her mother's stationed on either side of her. She beheld Enid in a transport of emotion, as the younger girl moved about helping Matthias do the honours of the entertainment. Her eyes sought John Thayer's and Matthias Howe's in innumerable looks of gratitude, and when she discovered the latter's gift, a twenty-dollar gold piece, beneath her plate, and found that Gaston had placed there also a check for one hundred dollars, she lifted her arms as though she would embrace them all. "Oh," she said in a breaking voice, "you are so good to me," and then her head sank on the board.

To see her thus affected them powerfully, Richard Yates the most of all. It was but an instant before she looked up and tried to return thanks for the

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many gifts which began to reveal themselves, as if by magic, about her. But he turned away, unable to conceal the feeling which the sight of her momentary weakness had produced upon him. To see that noble head, that graceful, supple neck, bowed produced a strange longing in him. He was stirred out of his usual brotherly regard for her. He glanced around again, as if to reassure himself. Ah, there she was, the same as ever, her calmness restored, her womanly dignity controlling even her excitement, the same and yet not the same. To Richard's eyes she was transformed. Later in the evening he sought her, for he had not yet bestowed his gift.

She was examining a paper-knife carved by Enid, the gloves given by her mother, the tie from Louis, the book from Jules — they were all represented, when Richard came up, and exhibited in its nest of cotton a jewelled pin. She exclaimed over it in pleasure.

"But you should not have bought anything so costly," she cried reproachfully, "there's a quarter's tuition gone."

"It is not half good enough for you," he returned with the embarrassed ardour of youth, and then he insisted on fastening it in the neck of her frock. A hundred times he had done as much in the freedom of their friendship, but now his fingers bungled strangely and his cheek flushed. What was this miracle due to, the unconscious appeal of an instant's weakness to his strength? Was it the fitting in his mind of counter-

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impulses together? As for Beulah, she sustained his gaze frankly and heard with a glow of pleasure that he expected soon to follow her to Paris. And if later, something in his manner obtruded itself on her reflections, the impression was lost sight of in the great emotion of parting from all that she had hitherto known.

After the guests were gone, she lingered on the threshold of the studio. The place bore the stamp of the best and the saddest days of her life. She thought of her work that it had seen — of her portrait of Enid, with its title that had proved so ironical. And she thought of the Mayor's bust. Then, almost as if they were her own, her mind dwelt fondly on Enid's efforts. Passing onward from the first crude sketch that the child had secretly made of her father — to try her wings as it were — to her last brilliant triumph at the Society of American Artists. Ah, that first heartache at her friend's lack of frankness, and later that instinct of wounded surprise when Enid had betrayed her unwillingness to receive her aid. These moments still stood out to her mind, though she buried them deep under the recollection of all the hours of happiness. The place was crowded to the windows, the doors, the ceilings. Not a corner but had its memory. And these memories were like ligaments connected with her heart, which she must break in order to be free.

Here it was that they had begun the race which for both of them was to end where and when? The studio had witnessed their start hand in hand, as it were, for,

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if she herself had been a little in advance, had she not waited for that friend and, with the little aid she had been able to give her, seen her come up beside her? And would they not continue speeding side by side towards the same goal? Could space alone separate them? No, they were linked indissolubly by their unbounded pride each in the other. Neither could go on alone. If one faltered, the other must surely turn back. Was not the motive power of one as like the motive power of the other as the steam which animates one engine is like the steam in another? — a motive power which was the desire to be herself, and to see the other, a true artist; to rejoice always with the other's joy and to suffer always with the other's pain; to race, to fail, to succeed together — always together!

So Beulah, as is the way with love, enveloped her friend in the mantle of her own longings until she became almost another self, a second soul. And that soul she read — but it was as unlike Enid's as a moonstone is unlike a diamond. The diamond reflects all the hues of heaven, but the moonstone has darks and lights hidden in its heart which can only be guessed at — never revealed.

The next morning the same kindly group was gathered on the pier to see her off. Jules, having evinced artistic ability, was apprenticed to Matthias Howe, and she clung to him, whispering, "I shall send for you soon, and we will work and study together over there. And you," she whispered to Enid, "will be

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coming before long, I feel it. It will be the next step." To Elizabeth and Gaston she said nothing. She merely looked at them with that look which is more than an embrace, hugged Louis for the last time, then ran up the plank with a sob in her throat, and so, young, ambitious, as unfearing as a boy and as unfear'd for by her parents, she started for a strange land.

BOOK II
THE RACE

CHAPTER I

TWO PILGRIMS

"I WILL get in, Jules, and you go and look after the baggage," and Beulah Marcel settled herself in a corner of the third-class railway carriage. Not without difficulty she lifted a large wicker basket, from which a wine-bottle protruded, to a place beside her, and then fell into a reverie which nevertheless left part of her brain free for observation of the scene about her.

The Gare d'Orleans is an animated place. Visibly it inhales and exhales trains. It sends forth a breath so laden with Parisian vitality as to neutralize the foreign elements mingling with it — and draws in a breath freighted with life from Germany, from Switzerland, from the Orient.

As Beulah observed the crowd weighted down with all sorts of travelling impedimenta, the Englishman with his bundle of canes and umbrellas, the American with his convenient hand-satchel, and the Frenchman bending under the burden of parcels and boxes, her pulses began to thrill with excitement. Still, she was leaving Paris after a sojourn there of two years, and though her face still wore the bright, satisfied look

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occasioned by her brother's arrival in Paris the week before, it was tinged, also, with a furtive melancholy. There was something in this big quiet nature that struck fibres into a favouring soil, like a plant difficult to uproot; and Paris had yielded Beulah Marcel the sustenance for a hardy growth, though scarcely a luxuriant one.

A keen observer could perhaps have read her story, fitting it together piece by piece. For instance, her hand-bag, a beribboned trifle, strictly Parisian, such as women of the more fashionable class carry when they go shopping, might fitly have suggested the *pension* where she had spent the first weeks after her arrival in Paris — a *pension* which prided itself upon its exclusiveness, where there was a mingling of American guests, and where one could fancy the dreamy, untrained girl taking her first serious notice of dress and shyly modifying her wardrobe that it might more nearly meet the prevailing standard. The hand-bag might also have told of her introduction in a mild way to that class of Parisian society that now and again attends a ball or a *soirée* at a *pension* of this kind, where the old women, if not dowagers, are thoroughly respectable mothers, where the girls are the daughters of merchants and manufacturers, and the young men, clerks and briefless lawyers. It was not difficult to see in the hand-bag all this, and to know that in this innocent way her knowledge of social life had been widened.

Then her jacket, that was the key to another chapter.

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It was a jacket which she had brought from home and which certainly would have been replaced by now, had not a person who represented himself as a distant relative of her father's called upon her shortly after her arrival and offered to get her the proper exchange on her money. With the confidence which was part of her nature, she had entrusted it to him, and then had waited vainly for his return. Deeply ashamed, and fearing that her family, if she told them, would try to make up the loss, she had never revealed it.

The jacket in its shabby independence told also of her sojourn at an "Institution for Self-Supporting Girls" conducted by an aged Frenchwoman, solely for gain and not for the protection of the young persons under her charge. Here Beulah had stayed for a few weeks and finally, driven by necessity, had sought and found an attic which combined all the advantages of an *atelier* and a lodging. Her skirt, in spite of its careful mending, proclaimed the dark stairs she had climbed every day, the uneven tiled floor, even the dormer window of her retreat where she had sat at her lathe in a bath of sunshine, which had slightly faded the dress.

But it is doubtful if any observer, especially if he were a man, would have taken the trouble to piece together these details. Woman, in a man's eyes, demands appropriate dress, just as a gem demands a rich setting, in order that her beauty may be manifest. The woman, too, feels this, therefore poverty is ever harder for her

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than for her brother unfortunates. If they are waggish, they even make a boast of it, going clad through all the student quarters in fantastic garments. But not so with a woman. She must either forget or take seriously her unfashionable apparel.

Beulah Marcel, after a few natural pangs, had adopted the former course. Her vanity, though it could be aroused on occasion, was not a controlling characteristic, and this indifference exposed her to the criticism of the superficial. In one so large and unusually well formed, they found this lack of "style" annoying. They did not perceive the arch of the wide smooth forehead, or the extraordinary clearness of the young face, because it was provokingly thin. This thinness, they would perhaps have guessed, was due to an ascetic fare of grapes and figs and chocolate — that menu of the destitute student, but they could not have comprehended that that which actually nourished the girl quite as much as food was an idea.

As to her sufferings, they might have deemed them purely physical, though in her eyes lingered an involuntary confession of past disappointment, anger, fiery scorn, and, finally, acceptance; all of which emotions were held in solution in the dark irises, like the varying lights in the heart of a jewel, rendering their glance a mixture of brave independence and unconscious appeal.

Packed in a crate and accompanying Beulah to Italy was a portrait relief which had been refused by

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the American who had ordered it. This relief represented four months' expense, four months of intense striving. Its only fault was that it was too faithful a likeness and not smooth enough in manner. Its refusal had completed her destitution. And, following immediately upon it, as if planned by a malicious fate, the last medal for the year had been awarded to a pupil whose work was inferior to her own. Beulah had already carried off one medal, and it would not do for the welfare of the school that the second medal should go to one so recently enrolled. When this final injustice was meted out to her, the Spartan training she had received at the hands of James Wooding stood her in good stead. She merely shrugged her shoulders — and left the school without a word. These buffetings, however, while they had developed her, in another way had stunted her. She longed passionately for change, and for the last half year she had devoted herself solely to cameo-cutting until she had saved enough for this trip to Italy with Jules.

When the young man appeared, she smiled and stretched forth her hand to remove the basket that he might seat himself beside her.

Jules was a fine reproduction of his father — Gaston in every feature and movement, in cheery spirit, but Gaston with the glory of youth upon him. He was several degrees better dressed than his sister — his clothes were all new, though he carried openly in a cigar-box all his cameo-cutter's outfit, with which

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minute tools he intended to carve a road to competency for them both.

And so the two started on their pilgrimage. Its Mecca was for Beulah that excellence which may or may not bring fame, — and for Jules, worldly success. As Gaston made superior shoes, so Jules determined to cut superior cameos, but, owing to an infusion of Elizabeth's thrift, he desired practical returns and recognition.

Their presence in a subtle way so illuminated the carriage that their fellow-passengers observed it. And at one of the stations where they halted, a begging friar, wearing sandals and clad in the brown habit which clipt him closely from head to heel, reading something of their emotion, extended towards them a box, supplicating alms, in the name of the Virgin, and Jules bestowed upon him a few sous, in the name, however, of happiness. Unlike his sister, perhaps owing to his fewer, more undisciplined years, his enjoyment constantly demanded expression.

He could not refrain from taking her hand as they both leaned forward gazing out of the window, and as they beheld the vineyards, like legions of green regiments, marching and countermarching over the hills, the towns and villages, each clustered about its church or cathedral, suggestive of the town that had cradled his father, he appeared, indeed, more like a native of Normandy than a native of America. A demonstrativeness, hitherto repressed, crept into his manner; his

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face glowed with the ardour of his poetic French blood. He was as prodigal of his delight as a child. Not a particular or incident of the journey but he glorified in this way.

The immense *pâté* which they had had made in Paris, and which was to constitute the principal provender for the trip, was an article on which his mind dwelt pleasantly. It was, in truth, a wonderful *pâté* — made up of several compartments, filled richly, some of the compartments with a concoction of nuts, others with meat, and still others with stewed fruits. This, with the wine and cherries they would buy, they calculated would last them until their arrival in Rome, and they had even planned gleefully how they would celebrate their arrival there with the last section. But in this they were destined to disappointment.

For the sake of economy, they had decided to go part of the way by water, and at Marseilles they boarded one of those small vessels which ply up and down the Mediterranean coast, carrying northward from Naples cargoes of fruit for reshipment to the large foreign markets, and on the return trip such passengers as present themselves. These wayfarers, usually to the number of three or four, are men and boys of a nomadic type, who carry their own provisions, sleep curled up in odd nooks about the deck, and pay for their transportation by a small amount to the captain and gratuities to the sailors.

For this trip Beulah and her brother were the only

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passengers, and when the captain saw her a few hours after their start, pale and forlorn, the one woman on board, he gave up his cabin to her, and she was able to escape the eyes of the rough tars, and the sight of the choppy blue waves pelted by the rain. Even Italy's alluring coast can be disagreeable in winter. The boat rolled and pitched like a tub afloat on an ocean of bluing. The captain provided Beulah from his own table, but Jules did not fare so well, and when the next day she emerged, it was to see the seasick lad lying on deck, his precious tools dislodged from the box and scattered about, while he remained oblivious of everything but his own misery, even of the fact that what was left of the *pâté* was, at that moment, being divided among a group of eager-eyed sailors, each of whom devoured his portion with relish. In spite of herself, Beulah laughed, then she ran to her brother, and, kneeling, gathered his head into her strong pitying arms. The same evening the pair arrived in Rome.

The pavements seemed to meet their feet with a caress, the soft air kissed their brows, the great gray mystery of the Eternal City was on every hand. The glories of her far-away past, leading through tremendous vistas up to the present, engulfed them. It was ancient, it was mediæval, it was modern — it was their Rome, theirs!

That same evening Beulah wrote a letter to Enid, to whom a certain flowering of her nature revealed itself as to no one else. "I will make you see," she

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wrote, "every bridge, every cathedral, every gallery, every crumbling ruin. You shall walk with me through the Vatican and the Colosseum, you shall fall down and worship in the Sistine Chapel. This Rome, which is to nourish my art, shall nourish yours too. I will give her to you with the light turned full on every picture and statue."

If you are young, or if you have ever known it, you can understand this ecstasy of the mind which takes possession of the wealth, the hoarded art, the history of all ages — a possession more absolute than ever achieved by an invading general, and lays it all at the feet of love.

CHAPTER II

A VESTAL

IN the crowning dilapidation of a building, constructed partly out of ancient materials and partly out of the poorest modern brick and mortar, Beulah and Jules established themselves. But poverty in this milder climate no longer meant to Beulah what it had in Paris. Its art both warmed and fed her, and, aglow with the fire of patriotism which is apt to blaze most brightly in the heart of the student when abroad, she started a group which she called "Indian Maize."

It was of most ambitious proportions and the American owner of the building, with shrewd foresight, waited for her to build it up, then ejected the impecunious Italian who had sublet the *atelier* to them, and came upon the pair for the rent of the entire apartment.

The property belonged to his wife, he explained smoothly, and she had lost so much by the former tenant. However, he would persuade her not to exact the rent they had already paid the Italian.

The brother and sister received this information in absolute silence. Then Jules grew white with rage,

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and the landlord, with a nod at Beulah, who had turned her back on him, hastily withdrew.

For a few seconds Beulah continued her work, then suddenly she threw down the tool and faced her brother.

"If you say so, Jules, I'll tear it down," she announced.

The boy stopped in his pacing. "For God's sake, no," he cried.

"Then there's nothing for it but to accept the situation," she said quietly. "He has not only a wife to hide behind, the coward! but he's a member of the American Legation. As for that extra room, we can turn it into a living apartment, I suppose."

And so the matter was settled. The *atelier* would have sufficed for the modest needs of the pair, but since the adjoining attic was too mean for them to hope to rent it, they took possession of it. The increased rent, however, was a heavy drain upon them. Beulah shuddered when she paid it, for where was the money coming from to cover the casting of the group that each day grew in tense sinewy grace? But for a long time she thrust this question into the background and won Jules out of his black moods by the brightness of hers.

Of a more mercurial temperament than Beulah, the refusal of a jeweller to pay him the full worth of his cameos was enough to reduce the lad to moodiness. He fumed because, while making himself almost inseparable from his lathe, like a species of mechanical centaur,

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he could earn only enough to cover their more urgent needs.

A desire for luxury, racial perhaps, since he did not inherit it immediately from his father, was developing in Jules with the years. He asked now and again a sip of the wine of life and was sulky that he received only the pure cold water. Tender as an infant's, his lips yet had the innocent sensuousness of his age; the down that defined their colour serving like the haze of an old portrait to make their curves less distinct. His hair, which retained its childish gold in places, fell in shaggy locks on his brow, the grace of indefiniteness lingered along all his outlines. He was neither child nor boy nor man, wholly, — to his sister he was a fitting representative of her entire family.

When he spoke and moved about, she saw a pleasant vision of her father in him, and, at rare moments, she discovered Elizabeth in an artistic quiet and calm, while the childish charms of Louis suggested themselves through his most mature beauties, and, after three years of separation, she felt herself in a sense united to them all through this brother, who was, none the less, intensely individual. His drooping shoulders and agile hands bespoke the prose of labour, while his eyes longed passionately for the poetry of existence.

Beulah, appreciating that their poverty, more absolute than any he had ever dreamed of, was crushing the boy, who compared it petulantly with the luxury of the rich, tried to divert his thoughts. "If you would

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take less note of the dandies in the Corso," she admonished, "and more of the cypresses and ruins, just being here would make you happy."

"I might as well be a digger of ditches," he objected. "I think that last jeweller read in my face that you and I were living on artichokes and bread. He is a thief, I tell you." Nevertheless he looked ashamed, and that same evening, when they walked through the narrow streets, linked arm in arm, his face was lighted as gloriously as hers.

And Beulah was a source of courage to more than Jules. Yielding at last to an unsympathetic father, Richard Yates had gone into the former's banking house, and his letters were moody and discontented. Beulah sent him long cheerful replies. Her attitude was that of a sensible elder sister. Then the messages that came from Olive Lanham were disquieting. The strife now being waged between the girl's two natures betrayed itself in hints, mere suggestions, which were, however, as legible as the smoke that rises above a battle-field. The most foreign subjects led up to a revelation. For instance: "Three days ago," Olive wrote, "my poor Monsieur Chauvin fell dead. He was fencing with an old captain when his foil slipped and he received a slight wound in his shoulder, not enough to occasion death. He died of heart failure. It is needless to say that the old captain is all broken up. As for me, when I saw him in his coffin, so pale, who used to be so rubicund, his pudgy hands crossed

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and powerless to draw me back from an abyss which had always threatened me, I knew that I was saying farewell to my guardian angel, and that henceforth all the devils would be after me. Monsieur Chauvin," she continued, "understood me. He had been through the same hell. Twenty years ago he married, because he couldn't conquer his passion for her, a diabolically handsome woman, who afterwards strangled the poet in him. Perhaps the poet will have a chance now. Who knows? Anyhow, it's foolish to dream of being here anything but a mere human — a creature just a little above the beasts."

These hints foreshadowed a climax, but this Beulah averted for a time by the simplicity of her own point of view. She was unable to understand Olive as she might perhaps later, and on this account she helped her more. A woman of wider experience would have given sympathy, which was what Olive looked for. Beulah did not give sympathy. If Olive was unhappy, why did she not throw herself into her work? Work was an ocean into which we can plunge and lose all our worries, for, thus submerged, the largest of them grow unimportant, trivial. The individual in us hangs its head, the universal comes to life.

This advice given to a woman whose heart and whose brain were at war, making her realize her own intense personality as never before, was of course futile. But Beulah had known only the love of family and friends, the feelings of a mature and generous child; Olive, the

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feeling, or tumult of feelings, that moulds into joying, suffering entity. The one through whom art spoke as the soil and the air speak through the flower, was the expression of thought, the other of emotion. And emotion individualizes, while thought serves by a thousand invisible threads to connect us with the universe.

Tranquil, spontaneous, fruitful in ideas, Beulah, however, had one care which she could not lighten by plunging her mind into these reasoning processes which were her delight. News had reached her that Enid Rahfield was in dire straits owing to her father's failing health, though of this the young girl herself wrote nothing. The fact worried Beulah more than her own poverty. Enid's physical strength was so slight. Day and night, she tried to devise means of assisting her. And the opportunity finally presented itself. But the sacrifice involved was supreme. Beulah's very soul rose in rebellion.

Some American women, after visiting the studio a number of times, apparently with no serious object, tendered the amazed girl a commission for a soldiers' monument. They wished, they said, to have the work done by a woman, and she had been recommended to them by Mr. Dumont of the New York Institute. "He mentioned also a Miss Enid Rahfield," the spokeswoman added smilingly, "but owing to your foreign experience, Miss Marcel, he advised, even urged strongly, our coming to you."

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Beulah made no answer. There was a contraction of her throat. Why had she been told this about Enid? Why had she to know of it? She felt a desire to throttle the innocently flattering ladies. The taste of triumph, a moment before sweet to intoxication, was bitter on her lips.

For three days she struggled, her own interests, then Enid's, gaining ascendancy.

"I didn't try for the work," she argued fiercely, "it was unsolicited." "Yes, but if you refused it," the reply came from some independent portion of her brain, "it would, of course, go to Enid. And she needs it more than you do. She may be in actual want! She may even be hungry! And her father dying!"

These pictures had such a harrowing effect upon her, that at the end of the third day, worn out with the struggle, she wrote a note to the committee in which she asked to have Enid associated with her. "It will not be the first time that we have worked together," she wrote, "Miss Rahfield has qualities which I do not possess; it will therefore be an advantage to the work, and since Mr. Dumont recommends her so highly, you, perhaps, will be willing."

But no sooner was the letter sent than she began to pray for a negative reply. The commission was hers to work out alone and untrammelled. Yet when the committee's answer came, giving their consent, provided Mr. Dumont approved the plan, she wrote Enid a glowing letter.

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The reply was a complete surprise. The offer was refused. The stand Enid took was courageous. "No, Beulah," she explained, "I can get along with poverty; I'm used to it. But I will have nothing to do with this commission, or any other, unless I can do it alone, which, of course, in the present case, is out of the question. I have a fine idea for the monument, though. It is to embody it in a fountain. I might, perhaps, call it "The Spring of Life." You can see something of what I mean by the enclosed pencil-drawing. Close as we are in feeling, I could not work this out, even with you, Beulah, — which I know you will appreciate."

The sketch was more than a sketch; it was a finished drawing of such spirit and originality that, after studying it, Beulah laid it with trembling fingers on the table.

Presently she hid it in a drawer and went down into the narrow Via Poli. But it spoke to her in the fever heat of the cobblestones and of the house-fronts. She saw the Angel's very aspect in the joyous blue of the sky. But perhaps it was not as good as she had thought. She returned and took it out with eyes eager to discover flaws, but a moment later two great tears rolled over her cheeks, which she wiped away with the back of her hand. It was good, and who knew if the opportunity to work it out would ever come, unless it came now!

She dropped into a chair and supported her face in

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her hands. So extreme was the struggle that her whole physical frame seemed to shrink. Now self triumphed and she moved restlessly while her glance grew animated. Then suddenly her eyes softened, and with nervous energy she drew towards her pen and paper and wrote the following note to Mr. Dumont:

"Mrs. Adams, of the Cleveland committee, will consult you further about the soldiers' monument, and you will please advise her to give it to Miss Rahfield. I am busy on a large group here, and she has a powerful conception for it."

Then, without pausing, she wrote to Enid telling her what she had done. "As for me, I am at work on a large Indian group," she explained, "so do you go ahead and carry out your idea. That sketch is inspired." But no sooner were the notes finished than she was seized with a revulsion of feeling. "The commission is mine," she muttered, "why should I not take it?" And she leaned back in her chair, pale and exasperated.

At that moment Jules entered the *atelier* and cast down his cap petulantly. He was a little haggard from overwork. Beulah observed him. She had steadfastly kept silent on the subject, but now she resolved to end the conflict by telling him. She pictured the change that would take place in him. Oh, how his eyes would light! He would fairly caper for joy.

"Jules," she said.

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He was laying out his tools and did not heed her.

"Jules."

He jerked out a drawer. "Well, what? What do you want?" he repeated, struck by the expression of her face, which was drawn, with the lips tightly pressed together.

"I want you to mail these two letters for me," she said with sudden weariness. "I want them to go by the first steamer."

Feeling strangely compelled, he started to comply. She followed him to the door. "Dear, dear Jules," she whispered, and passed her fingers through his hair. The next day her gentleness towards him increased. She was without a whole pair of gloves, but she purchased a silk scarf for Jules and put it around his neck with almost a hint of apology.

Heroism is seldom a sustained radiance: it records itself in flashes. So Beulah had moments when she termed this action quixotic folly. How had she thought to cast her Indian group without money? she asked herself moodily, and how was she to get money if she refused commissions? It was just her fate that Enid, rather than any other woman artist, would have been the loser if she had accepted it.

On the whole, however, the thought of what she had done was a secret source of happiness to her; and a way for putting into plaster the group on which she was working would certainly open. The superstitious faith of the artistic temperament was not lacking in her.

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The brother and sister had come to Rome in December. By May the group was almost finished. Had the demand for cameos been greater, she could have turned her skill in that direction to account. But it was as much as Jules could do to find a market for those he cut. Rome was deserted during the summer, the dealer explained, and there was no call for gems of any kind. Beulah lingered over the work, postponing the finishing. The size frightened her. Why had she made it so large? And yet she had never done anything that pleased her so much.

Driven by mingled delight and anxiety, she often sought the ruins at sunset. The place and the hour were inspiring, and her fertile imagination invented project after project for the solution of her difficulty, but they were vague, formless plans. It was as if this being, all intelligence and capability, having done what she could, looked to heaven for the accomplishment of her labour.

Through the *concierge*, a woman with wide, rolling eyes and a wagging tongue, her perplexity was known to the few inmates of the house where she dwelt, and the result was that she received many kind greetings and nods of encouragement from these fellow lodgers. This sympathy, however, decreased with mathematical nicety with the stairs. Indeed, it scarcely existed at all below the fourth and fifth *pianos*, for it is ever the poor that give most freely of this currency of the heart — the only currency allowed them. In the lower halls the

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silent, absorbed figure of the girl was awarded barely a glance by the well-dressed women and men; while the young merchant whose shop of antiquities was on the ground floor, even considered the story when he heard it vastly amusing. "*Per Bacco*, it was just like an artist to do such a thing," he said.

But Beulah heeded little their amusement or their sympathy. In spite of her healthy nerves and optimistic temperament, the anxiety was beginning to tell upon her. She could not keep that great group wet much longer. The clay would become saturated and it would fall. Something of this anxiety betrayed itself in her movements and in an absent-minded air. One day, for instance, utterly forgetful, she sallied forth wearing upon her feet (she had inherited from her father a certain fancifulness in footgear) the sandals she usually wore only in the studio.

"She is the connecting link between the Past and the Present," thought John Howard, with an amused smile, looking up from his guide-book. "I believe I'll ask her about this."

He lifted his hat. "Can you tell me if this pile of stone is the shrine mentioned by Baedeker, or is it that pile?" he asked.

Youth is seldom formidable, but Beulah was still struggling with her thoughts. They were mirrored in her eyes, and the trouble of them lay along her cheeks and brow. She thus possessed a dignity foreign to her years.

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"What?" she asked, turning around. Her tone, in its mild remoteness, suggested the tenderness and felicity of home ties.

John Howard flushed. He was middle-aged, slightly stoop-shouldered even, but he flushed like a wanderer who finds himself, through a misapprehension, warmed at a stranger's hearth. A boyish look, vagrant, fleeting, came up into his kind eyes. "I — I beg your pardon," he said.

She woke from her reverie. "It is I who should say that," she cried. "What did you ask me?"

Their two youths met; his, a half-withered flower that, yielding to the contagion of the life near it, unfurls itself again — hers, the perfect flower of the day, the hour. A sort of dewy freshness in her colouring became apparent now that she gave her attention to him. With deep thought erased from her brow, she looked in her poor dress, which she carried with an air of unconcern, a very young girl.

"The poppies," he said whimsically, "they light the whole place; it is difficult to discover the shrine of the Sacred Fire."

She took the guide-book into her hands, as she did so casting towards him one of those penetrating glances which with women and young children are a species of divining rod.

She saw a man of perhaps fifty, whose patient, deep-set and not over-large eyes betrayed the scholar, whose cheeks, long and slightly hollow, blended in hue with

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his sandy beard, whose nose was straight and finely sculptured enough to give its owner an air of distinction, a man who wore over his spare but muscular frame a mantle as patent as a coat, the mantle of one who has achieved a military conquest over himself and become outwardly as mild as a little child. This stranger could have passed anywhere without attracting especial notice, but look at him a second time and a refinement of force was observable in him, strength brought to its last and highest stage, the stage, not of bold openness, but of concealment.

To Beulah he was merely an aimable and intelligent tourist whom it would be a pleasure to set right. She knew every foot of the historic ground and she pointed out the Shrine and the Palace of the Cæsars, and, beyond that, the Arch of Constantine. She led him into the Sacra Via and explained the whole topography of the ruined quarter.

Golden light from the sunset seemed to overflow the enormous crumbling cup of the Colosseum. The dust which rose from the old roadway was gold, and gold clung to the girl's sandalled feet. There were black and gray and pink shadows on all the arches, and on the richly carved capitals of the fallen columns. She tossed a bit of marble from hand to hand as she spoke. She might have been pronouncing some sort of an incantation, for suddenly to the man before her the columns lifted themselves; palaces and temples rose before him. It was early Rome, not ruined, it was

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the citadel in his heart rebuilt, it was youth. When she at last left him, he stood looking after her. He pulled softly at his beard.

Something of age and weariness had been stealing over this man with the years. But now he felt in a subtle fashion liberated. "In ancient days," he reflected, encouraging the fancy which had possessed him, "if a prisoner chanced to meet a vestal, it was sufficient to cause his release. And why not the same to-day? Her light," he added to himself, "is the sacred fire of enthusiasm. She has released me. I am young again."

Still cherishing this fancy, he smiled a little wistfully and, hailing a cab, left the place where ruin now brooded supreme.

CHAPTER III

BESIDE THE FOUNTAIN OF TREVI

JOHN HOWARD turned from the darkening terrace and entered the *sala di pranzo* by one of the long windows. There is ever a certain elegance — a subtle refinement, imparted by the conscious wearing or carrying of a flower; and when this consciousness is filled with tenderness, no gem of whatever brilliancy can equal the simplest blossom. Touched by a higher form of life than its own, a life that understands, it becomes conspicuous in colour and fragrance. If worn on the dress, the coat, it seems to enrich the fabric; if carried in the hand, it draws attention to the whiteness, the form, the delicate hold. So John Howard, carrying a rose in his gentle fingers, was at once marked by the company.

“*Il Signor Americano* is looking well this evening,” said an elderly Englishwoman, a Lady Taylor, as he took his place at the table. They were a mere handful enlivening one end of the long board, which, a third of the way up its length, glowed with candles; the rest of the room was shadowy. His nearest neighbour, the daughter of the woman who had just spoken, passed

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him the bread. She was neither young nor old, and her face was animated by a pair of small but intelligent eyes. She was writing a book on the revival of art in Italy, and was apparently a conflagration of ideas, which burst from her in the form of sentences like sky-rockets, each one tipped with light, and soaring, for the most part, far above her listeners' heads.

The company, in fact, was made up of just such persons as one would expect to find lingering in a place after the season. They were all persuaded they had a pressing reason for risking the dangers of Rome in summer, but, with the exception of Kate Taylor and John Howard, there was not a reason among them worth mentioning. They were all, in consequence, intensely jealous of their various missions, which converted them into martyrs, and while they accepted the importance of John Howard's purpose, Kate Taylor's aroused antagonism. Especially was this true of Mr. Simpson, who sat opposite to her. He had just been laughing at her, and the passing of the bread to her neighbour was an unconscious appeal for sympathy.

But John Howard looked more at the rose which he had laid beside his plate than at any of his fellow diners. The rose spoke to him of Flavia Publicia, for thus he had humorously christened his guide of the afternoon. It recalled to him half-forgotten emotions of his young manhood, tender, delicious as the light of morning. It translated to him anew the meanings of night and morning, and, more than all, the abound-

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ing beauties of Italy. No, that which possessed him was not an illusion, it had not yet faded. And, smiling, he lifted his wineglass and drank to the revival of this joy of being within himself.

“Art up to date,” and Mr. Simpson wound his fingers tightly in his watch-chain in a way he had when intending to be particularly disagreeable, “art up to date, my dear Miss Taylor, you will find at the top of an old building in the Via Poli. I chanced to be passing there this morning. There is an antiquary’s shop in the basement, and I dropped in and incidentally got hold of something that will do for your book; for modern art — art as she exists in Italy to-day, passed us wearing sandals, though the divine spirit of the ancients had crept no higher than the feet, I’m afraid. When my dealer saw her, he shrugged his shoulders. ‘*Ecco, Signor,*’ he cried, ‘what think you? *La bella Americana* has built up a huge statue in the clay and has not the money wherewith to cast it. Therefore, she walks the streets with chin *so*, hands clasped, seeking the miraculous. Eh, *Diavolo*, she has fine eyes and would do much better to look up sometimes. For modern Italian art, as you have doubtless discovered, is an American and a woman.” The speaker concluded with a laugh and an irritating twirl of his mustache, and Kate Taylor flushed; his opinion of his own country in the field of art, and his estimation of women in serious work, were well known.

Enriched by a wife’s money on which he lived in-

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dolently, the Honourable John Simpson was a student of Egyptology, a dilettante in the study which was, with John Howard, a passion. A number of scarabæi depended from his watch-chain and seemed to be animated by the very breath of his body. He wore a head of Isis on his tie, the latter of an execrable colour, and his wife, a large florid woman, wore amulets in her ears and around her neck. Howard detested him and, to mark his dislike, was always gravely attentive to the wife. Now in his heart he swore at him.

The fellow had described Flavia Publicia, there could be no mistake, and here was the secret of her troubled air. By an adroit question he learned what he wished, at the same time turning the conversation and thereby winning Miss Taylor's gratitude.

"You say there was nothing in the dealer's shop?" he asked. "Had he no genuine scarabæi?"

"Why, he may have had something," responded the other, pleased to have been consulted. "He had nothing that I wanted. The address, however, is 34 Via Poli. Any child can direct you. Or I'll go down there to-morrow morning with you, if you like."

But John Howard by an abrupt change of manner thrust the other back into the outermost circle of his attention, the position he usually occupied. "Thank you," he answered coldly, "any child, as you say, can probably direct me."

Half ashamed, there were moments in which he tried to persuade himself that his interest in the

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unknown woman was worthy of a boy in his teens. But his arguments were only half-hearted. In truth, he was eager to yield himself to that strange return of youthful sensations which the thought of her induced. A band of musicians who had been singing in the doorway detached themselves from the shadows and began to march around the table. The women shook tambourines aloft — the men made their fiddles squeak grotesquely, now under a leg or an arm. With their floating kerchiefs and crimson sashes, they seemed to John Howard a whirling cloud, or now it was a tapestry that they unfurled, a tapestry of melody, and, woven of the different strains, the silken chords, he beheld the face of Flavia Publicia.

The vivid, sensuous air, however, endowed her with attractions which were foreign to her. Thus her eyes, less thoughtful than he remembered them, seemed, on a sudden, to welcome love.

At this point in his reflections he smiled. But still the thought clung to him, and later, standing apart from the others in the wide marble portico of the hotel, he listened to the minstrels, who, leaning now in graceful attitudes against the balustrade, sang such romances as are never even dreamed of in other lands. And the blue Italian night listened, the roses listened, and John Howard, with shoulders set squarely against a column and eyes on the smoke of his cigarette, listened too with his whole being.

These songs, combined with the odour of roses, the

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near presence of women, one or two with their soft throats bared, the seductive charms of the atmosphere, conspired to foster his dream, in which the weight of twenty years seemed to fall from his shoulders. He saw himself invested with the divine rights of youth, greeting her, studying the pretty fancies of her heart and mind, winning her confidence, in fact, becoming her lover. But who can explain these intoxications of the soul, induced by libations from various sources? Sometimes the merest sip of science is enough to transport us into ethereal regions, a draught of art or music, and we cease to be mundane creatures; while the glance of a woman's eye, the form of her cheek, the sight of her lips, where speech seems to bloom, is to many a man the subtlest champagne of the spirit.

The next morning John Howard wrote for two hours before breakfast, drank his coffee, and read his paper. His mood of the evening before had completely vanished. He looked a little tired, and the long straight line between the eyes, at some moments scarcely discernible, was now a deep indentation as though ceaseless thought had worn it there. During the pauses in his work, he played nervously with his pencil.

With his books flanking him on every side, and a few pictures, chiefly of Egypt, lending a remote, foreign dignity to the walls, he looked at that moment essentially himself. No exterior excitement fanned to a blaze the lingering youth in him. A particular form of expression which he required eluded him, and he seemed

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exasperated, turning very often in his chair as if about to rise and pace up and down.

By birth his was a temperament of excessive sensibility and force of imagination. One glance at his hands revealed this. They were long and thin, the tips of the fingers of such perfect delicacy as to suggest the constant turning of book leaves. Indeed, it was said among his friends that he could no more be separated from his book than St. Peter from his key.

In youth, poor and of scholarly inclination, he had visited Egypt at first through the portals of history. Later, he had described his imaginary journeys to this chosen land in a series of vivid articles, which, chiefly for their literary value, had brought him a certain amount of recognition. And it was from this beginning he had worked his way up. A powerful, almost ideal, love affair had furnished the incentive which he needed in those early years, and it was from a woman that he had derived much of his force, his ambition. The affair, however, had ended disastrously, and, chiefly because he had never again become sufficiently interested, and feared above all things making a woman unhappy, he had never married. But he liked women and in intellectual circles inspired not a little admiration among them. One or two, with whom he had long been friends, still continued to write to him, though he had not been back to America for years.

Lacking a wife or family, he liked to pretend that he had found these companions in his work. Thus he

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sometimes proclaimed with delicate humour that study was for him a dearly beloved mistress, whom one day he recognized in a volume of history, the next in a volume of science, these being the different dresses which she assumed to please him. The books which he was enabled through her to write were the children born of the union. Ever kind and equable, "exciting only to gentle joys" as Raphael Valentine declared, was study not the fitting companion for maturity? To youth alone belonged flushing, paling, variable woman.

But on the morning in question, the feeling, retained in his sub-consciousness since the evening before, rose to the surface.

At ten o'clock he suddenly pushed aside his papers. The rose which he had gathered in the twilight stood before him on the desk. He seized it and buried his face in it. He would take a tramp; it would elucidate his ideas. But his tramp led him into the Via Poli.

When he viewed the house at the top of which his Flavia Publicia dwelt, and saw issuing from its street door a youth who bore a certain resemblance to her, he laughed slightly. Then he shrugged his shoulders. "Well, why shouldn't I look her up?" he muttered. "Perhaps I can help her."

The idea appealed to him and on various pretexts he visited the shop of the dealer in antiquities. But never did he ask a question concerning her. If the man had spoken of her, he would have checked him,

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considering the merest mention of her by the sly-eyed fellow a profanation.

On the occasion of his third visit he was rewarded by the sight of her. A younger man, trusting to ingenuous explanations, to the appeal made by youth to youth, would have been more bold. But, in answer to her slight glance of recognition, John Howard merely bowed gravely, and suffered her to pass on and fade into the grayness at the street's end. Fearing to attract the vender's attention, he did not so much as allow his eyes to follow her. Yet he knew, as well as if he had studied it minutely, every detail of her dress. How she was smiling, as if occupied with pleasant fancies from which her thoughts, like a flock of birds, took airy flight on seeing him. How she stopped at a fruit-stand a block away and bought an orange which, carried against the brown of her dress, looked like a golden globe. Such an appeal did she make to his imagination that at different moments of the day distinct pictures of her flashed across his mind.

Yet it was full two weeks before he met her in the ruins at sunset and spoke with her. Avoiding any semblance of the unseemly haste of youth, he chose to make his approach as through a corridor in which his steps awoke no echoes to put her to timorous flight. He would not even presume upon his age and his object, which was simply to be of assistance to her. He wished to inspire her with every confidence, little guessing how difficult it would have been for him to

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inspire anything else. But the brief dream he had indulged in regard to her made him self-conscious.

Fearing lest his thought of her, which grew in spite of him, should betray itself, he even made himself appear older in her eyes than he actually was, hiding beneath a mask of age the strange sense of youth that had come to him. They met a second and a third time, apparently by chance, in the vicinity of the Colosseum. And then, one day, he appeared at the *atelier*.

Beulah was in no way displeased. She liked the stranger with his grave and quiet air. Jules, however, was immensely confused. The visitor had caught him posing for the arms of the woman in the clay group. Well, he would never pose again, whatever the saving in model hire, and, no matter how great the heat, the curtain over the door should be kept drawn. He stepped from the throne, drawing down the sleeves of his blouse over his arms, which were, in truth, white and softly rounded enough to suggest a woman's. His cheeks mantled brightly. Though John Howard was too delicate to appear to notice the circumstance, the boy never forgot it. He had suffered a distinct loss of dignity in his own eyes.

As for the work, Howard was actually embarrassed before it. He had not expected a composition of such strength and originality. Half suspecting that she had had assistance, he cast a rapid glance at the young sculptor, but she stood near him quietly removing the

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clay from a tool, while she herself studied the group with ardent attention. After that, he did not look at her again, directly.

He felt within himself an inexplicable excitement. There were in her then no hidden insidious qualities, for had she possessed them they must have marred so intimate a work as this. Such as she appeared, beautiful, naive, and of a luminous intelligence, she was — this gracious young creature in her clay-stained blouse.

He did not trust himself to say much, but praised the work in careful terms strangely at variance with the look in his eyes, which he instinctively kept bent on the work, for in those eyes she might have read his welcome of her.

From that time their acquaintance progressed rapidly. Sometimes Howard felt, when he saw her, that her uncast work was oppressing the girl like an actual weight. She had a weary preoccupied air. At one moment her hands hung nerveless at her sides, at other times a repressed uncertain energy spoke in every movement. He watched this perplexity grow and waited the moment when he might make his offer with some hope of its being accepted. The "Indian Maize" was to be cut in marble, he had decided that.

To this end he contrived to meet her very often.

He told her of the book he was preparing and of his visits to libraries and museums. And one day, when

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she offered him a cup of tea, he broke still further his customary reserve, and told her of his life in Egypt.

"I hadn't been there much over six months," he explained as he gently stirred the beverage, "when I was sent by the Egyptian Government to the Island of Thasos to discover the site of an ancient silver mine which they had some idea of reopening. The expedition proved to be intensely interesting, for we found the silver mine, curiously enough, by the aid of a copy of Herodotus, rode, in fact, directly to the spot, the position of which was exactly as he describes it. The site was, of course, covered by a thick growth of timber, but we found where the excavation had been made, and the geologist who accompanied me, breaking off a piece of the rock said, 'Yes, this is the mine.'

"Then on the opposite side of the island was a surface quarry, which Herodotus also describes, and all about were blocks partly hewn and left by the hands that had chiselled them nearly two thousand years ago. While in a neighbouring and secluded valley," he continued, bending closer to her, "was a beautiful monument, wonderfully preserved. The inscription, as if written by its occupant, told that beneath rested the remains of a young girl of fifteen, who laments her own early death and the grief of her parents. It was a strange feeling, as you can imagine," he concluded, "to stand in that sequestered spot, no sound to break the silence save the wash of the surf upon the rocky shore, and to read this plaint written over two thousand

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years ago and to know that it was unheeded and unknown save by the passing stranger or the wandering goatherd who strayed hither with his flocks."

Beulah listened to this account, her eyes brightening with pleasure. Her imagination flamed in response to his. She saw the scenes he pictured. From that time she understood him better, and because of this and the greater number of his years she admitted him into her innocent Bohemian world without question.

It soon became their custom to walk and drive together, she being his guide to different points of interest in the city. Sometimes Jules accompanied them and the three dined together at some café where both the food and the music were good. At these moments, John Howard threw off all disguises. He saw the world through their youthful eyes — he enjoyed through them. Indeed, a stranger watching them might have judged him in mood the youngest of the three. He was well known among Egyptologists as a man of prodigious intelligence, as a writer, but as an entertaining companion, as a teller of excellent stories, he was known to few, and those few far away and the friends of past days. Indeed, in his present guise, he was scarcely known to himself. He made use of words as living things, choosing them with the greatest delicacy and precision, judging the success of his attempts by the light that sparkled in the two pair of eyes meeting his. His wit, his humour, his keen satire, were punctuated, as it were, by the laughter that rippled

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from their lips. There he found his periods, his exclamation points. The three were often the envy of the people in the cafés which they frequented. He had a way in his most expansive moments of leaning towards them over the table, having first set the dishes aside for the freer use of his fine and shapely hands. The man, usually so quiet, became eloquent, in a manner, however, always characterized by innate modesty. O youth, the fine country! Led by these two, he had entered it again.

Beulah found a strange restfulness in his presence. He diverted her thoughts, and she eagerly allowed herself to be amused. She looked up to him and deferred to his opinions more than she realized. Finally the day came when she confided her difficulty to him.

Jules having some boyish scheme on hand, they dined that evening tête-à-tête, and afterwards walked in the Pincian gardens. At eight o'clock, as the light was beginning to fade, John Howard proposed that they take a cab and drive slowly through the city. "I have about decided to leave all this to-morrow," he explained. "I want to get a last clear impression of it." Noticing her unusual depression, he had planned this little ruse in the hope of drawing her story from her. It was successful.

She turned sharply and looked at him, in her eyes a glow of frank surprise and pain. So she was to lose him, and he was such a satisfactory friend. Never had she known any one on whom she could rely so com-

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pletely. And immediately she felt impelled, before he went away, to lay before him her difficulty. It would be a distinct lightening of the burden, for he would not accuse her, as many would, of lack of foresight. He would understand, being of an artistic temperament himself, that she could not have done differently. Fate, malicious, through cameo-cutters and landlords, was alone responsible.

It never occurred to Beulah that her companion's financial position was not the same as her own. He was a worker, therefore he must be poor. If he had money to spend on dinners and cabs, it was only that poverty for a man can never be quite the absolute thing it is for a woman. She therefore poured out her confession without scruple.

"And now it's finished," she concluded sadly. "I put the last touch on it to-day. If I worked on it any longer I should run the risk of spoiling it. So the question confronts me, how is it to be cast? Where are the necessary three hundred and seventy-five lira — not in my pocket, that's sure! Now do you wonder that I am worried? The group like a monster is devouring both Jules and me, I think," she added with a little uncertain laugh.

"But they're in this pocket," he said quietly." She started and a quiver passed through the shoulder next his.

"I should like to help you," he insisted.

She turned towards him and he saw large bright

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tears standing in her eyes. "Oh, thank you!" She breathed the words out like an impulsive child, looking upon him with such a softening of gratitude that he felt like falling on his knees before her. "But I must not fill your last evening in this way," she continued. "I — I don't know what made me. Let's drive to the Trevi fountain," she went on eagerly, "and you throw a ha'penny over your shoulder, and when you come again my group may be cast and standing in a public square."

She spoke with determined brightness, and as he was silent, gave the direction herself to the driver. Beneath the surface he knew that she suffered sharp embarrassment.

Why could he not continue? The opening had been suitable. But his vision of her as she appeared on that first evening recurred to tempt him anew. Simply because she was touched by his sympathy her eyes had filled. He knew this. Yet it was so easy to imagine them suffused from another cause. And abruptly he turned from her like a man who fears to trust himself.

They rattled through wide and narrow roads, studded with torches and lamps. But the pale moon, the faint, silvery blot up there, illumined and veiled all. Just so his future was illumined, his past veiled by the translucent light of this fair, this tender young face so close beside him.

As they bowed by the door of a basement they caught a ruddy glow from the interior and had a vision

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of laughing faces above raised glasses, the rollicking melody wafted out to them associating itself with the fantastic movement of the feather on the cab-horse's head, so that even after they had passed out of hearing the strains seemed to accompany them in pantomime. For once the saddest of all beasts went to a glad measure.

At a fruit-stand where the lemons sprang from pointed sticks, a maid in brief skirt, corselet, and head-cloth, tendered an apple, rosy as her own look, to a youth in green apron and scarlet sash — the true colours ever for the young and the loving. A *détour* on the part of the driver brought them by Trajan's column, remote, isolated in the midst of its enclosure, an exclamation point on the page of time, and yet even here was the inevitable sign. Some one had cast a bunch of roses at its base, the exhaling fragrance of which must have assailed the nostrils of the sleeping emperor and waked him perhaps to dear memories.

When they reached the Trevi fountain they left the cab, and Howard resumed where he had left off, but with different intent. A giddiness had gathered in his brain and the din of the waters in his ears was not so loud as the continuous onrush of his own feelings.

"Beulah," he began in a confused voice, riveting his eyes on her hands, which shone white and strong in the moonlight, "you must let me help you. Your work is too good to lose, and then I — I care for you." And suddenly his glance leaped from her hands to her face, and clung there, desperately. Not daring to

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give expression to the full tide of feeling that surged in his heart, he was possessed by a fancy that he had offered it to her in a goblet, a cup. Dizzy with the vision of her parted lips and wide eyes, he turned and looked up at the great tumbling mass, and the two currents went on together. It was love, love, love; a surging cataract, the very essence of life! And suddenly all that for years had been silent in his nature, all the spiritual and physical longing of man for woman, was rife in him. He experienced a fierce agitation of the senses, but, by a mighty effort, he again spoke quietly.

"Yes, and perhaps it's for this I have been accumulating what I have," he continued, with infinite wistfulness. "For I know, dear, — yes, I'm sure that I could help you as a younger man couldn't — and, very likely, wouldn't."

Such arguments, and he dared to drop in the cup ingredients such as these, when the fountain itself was so pure! But that tide, had he let it flow forth, would have drowned her — swept her from him by its own force, he felt.

As it was, after a first start of surprise, she regarded him in absolute silence. The vision of the "Indian Maize," not in fragile plaster, but locked, each carefully studied point of composition, in imperishable marble, made her, at the first suggestion, clasp one hand over the other tightly. Frightened and disconcerted, she studied him from under drawn brows. In

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her uneasiness she noticed a star. It seemed to point to Howard like a bright finger. When he said, "I care for you," she looked back at him, a strange and ultimate yearning awake in her breast. Something of the repressed passion in the man had reached her.

She was almost childishly ignorant of the possible depths of love between a man and a woman. It was a subject on which she had never reflected. Now a sense of comforted loneliness bewildered her. The very keenness of her gratitude, felt in the white wonder of the night, was confusing. Conscious of his tenderness as of some protective influence closing round her, answering to that new, that inexplicable craving awake for the first time in her own breast, she felt a quivering desire to weep. And suddenly overcome by her emotion, and utterly misled by it, she made a wavering movement towards him. She reached out her hands.

With a cry, John Howard crushed them against his breast. "I love you," he muttered. Then almost violently he lifted her head between his two hands. "I love you," he repeated, and trembling he drew her white face with its startled eyes and tremulous mouth close, close to his own; and their lips met.

CHAPTER IV

IN A QUESTION CHAMBER

JULES received the announcement of Beulah's engagement sombrely. A boyish reverence had all along characterized his feeling for Howard. But this somewhat abated when he learned of the proposed marriage. In his heart the boy challenged the Egyptologist's age. However, of course Beulah knew her own mind. For himself, Jules indulged romantic dreams. Somewhere, shrouded in the future as in a veil, a woman waited for him.

Between the boy with his imaginary love and the man who had won a tangible woman there was a marked difference in attitude. Jules was assured; no thought of possible failure disturbed him; John Howard was tortured by innumerable doubts. He should not have taken advantage of Beulah's difficulty. He intended to cast her group in any case, and should have made known his intention. Should he risk telling her now? "No, no," he thought, "afterwards!" And he knew that, in spite of his scruples, if all were to do over, he would act no differently. He dwelt on the love he would awaken in her. He would so fill her

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life with his devotion, he resolved, that she must respond.

Many women, like Kate Taylor, of earnest purpose and superior mind, had been attracted to him, and he thought of a certain woman of fashion in New York, who, after meeting him, had thrown herself into the study of Egyptology. Under his casual direction she had pursued the study for five years. And there were other women of a gentler mould who had naively paid him court. If this were so, could he not hope for success with this inexperienced girl, for whom he entertained a feeling so intense and concentrated that it amazed him?

Out of the feminine devotion which, like incense, had trailed faint and sweet across his life, he now selected memories of only such women as had appealed to him. He analyzed what had been the particular charm of each; and then with the eagerness of a boy in a delightful game found all these charms, or their equivalent, united in Beulah, and more, — something pure, strong, and inscrutable, which made her all that he had desired and had never dreamed of meeting. The qualities, however, which he associated with his early love, he was careful not to look for in her. That passion, for all its ardour, had never influenced him like this. He felt that he was awakening after years of sleep.

While nothing was lacking in the intimate appeal Beulah made to him, she roused all that was dreamy

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and ideal in his nature, and giving rein to his imagination he attempted to trace her disguised in art and poetry, in places and scenes luminous in his memory. He recalled in the monastery of the Certosa the almost obliterated relief of a sleeping monk, clipt from head to heel in a straight habit, the folds of which were instinct with that coquetry that lurks, unconscious of itself, behind all human dignity. His love, her youth clothed upon with deep and serious quiet, charmed him with the remembered charm of this burial slab. Again, he sought to find her in a line of verse. She looked at him through words of peaceful meaning; in the rhythm he caught her movements, head and waist and sandalled feet. She appeared before him, limned in melody, a creature girlish and incomplete. And the more extravagant the fancy, the deeper was his pleasure in it.

These imaginings, these delicate emanations of the soul which bespoke the excitement of his inner life, sometimes engaged him for hours. At other times a mood, less exalted but even more intense, shaped existence to a keen physical joy. The force of character that was revealed in her glance and in the contours of her round smooth face, the strength that spoke in her shoulders and in her swinging gait, — all her unimpaired young health, brought him a sharp delight. Sometimes he called her "The Unknown Woman," from her likeness to the Florentine bust.

But often in her presence a pity for her innocence

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and ignorance of the world laid hold upon him. This made him angry. More than is usual with women she knew what she was about, he argued. And Beulah's bearing certainly substantiated this. Still preoccupied with her work, when she was with him she was affectionate and serene, evincing a special contentment in his presence. And this noble detachment of mind made the charm of her femininity even more intoxicating.

One day he had been telling her of his stay in Uganda, in British East Africa. In fancy she saw the half-civilized natives, the mission church established by the Catholic Fathers, and the wide desolation of the spot.

"On a certain morning," he said, "I went out for a long walk with a little friend of mine. We happened to be upon a road where a single telegraph wire was fastened to the trees. I asked my little girl, Pia, what it was, and she said in Luganda, 'That is a voice; it speaks from afar the words of men; sometimes it speaks to the white men in Kampala (the fort) and sometimes it speaks from them to men in distant lands. It is a voice.' Her quaint reply made me realize how slender were the two connections, that 'Voice' and the single line of railway upon which we depended for communication with the outside world. And I found myself dreaming what, by more subtle telegraphy, the Voice of the spirit might not bring back to me, if I sent it forth to America, say, laden with the message of my

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loneliness. I think I expected word of you even then," he concluded in a whisper.

For a few moments each remained absorbed in thought. Beulah saw the gentle scholar mingling for a time with the pious Fathers and nuns in their work of salvation among the savages, and the contrast touched her, for after all he was a scholar, not a priest. And he saw only her hands folded quietly one above the other on her lap, as she sat beside him on a low stool. "Beautiful miracle-workers!" he whispered, and touched them. For answer she clasped them on his knee and put her cheek against them.

Dazzled by his success, Howard urged the marriage and Beulah raised no objection. She was, in fact, impatient to enter on this new life which promised so well, and her happiness included her brother. Howard, she knew, wished to help the boy, and she would be able to give Jules the opportunities for recreation and instruction essential to his development. She did not take into consideration the independent spirit that would refuse this aid. To Gaston and Elizabeth she wrote, and after some correspondence obtained from them an anxious and doubtful consent, with the necessary papers. Owing to Howard's influence, proceedings were hastened.

Thus it happened that one day she closed the door of her *atelier* on poverty and obscurity, and passed under the leathern curtain of *Santa Croce* to wealth and the recognition which falls like a ray of directed

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light on a picture. The gray walls, distant as they were, hemmed her in. But she stood unsuspecting, keeping closer to Jules than to John Howard, and clasping the flower which one of the drab beggars lining the steps outside had bestowed upon her. The flower, plucked from a crevice and ill-nurtured, was the symbol of want, perhaps, but also of the sunshine and freedom which had characterized her days.

Nothing warned her, and so they waited in the chilly place, Jules shivering, for the priest to perform the ceremony. John Howard, oppressed by doubt, stood aloof, watching her from under darkened brows. Had she hesitated, had there been one sign of withdrawal in her manner, he would have released her. And surely in a creature so finely constituted, her very femininity should have raised a note of warning. But she was like a tower in which the chief bell, calculated to shake the structure from turret to foundation, has never been sounded. She smiled at him affectionately, and if she looked a little pale it was only that the church, despite its richness, was a desolate place, gray and hollow-sounding. And so they were wedded, exchanging the vows which Gaston and Elizabeth and a world of loving and unloving pairs had exchanged before them.

The marriage made a little stir in the small circle that claimed John Howard, all the more as John Simpson's detective instincts had led him to ferret out some of the facts, to which he added his own conjectures. The story how, to have her statue cast, the

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penniless young artist was wedding the man of letters — and of substance — much older than herself, was pleasanter in his mouth than the taste of soup or meat, and he related it in turn to every person at table. Kate Taylor, when she heard of the event, flushed the dull, painful flush of a woman of thirty-five, and immediately sent a note of congratulation to the Hotel Royal whither Howard had taken his bride. Otherwise the event went almost unnoticed.

The first weeks were spent by Beulah in a state of bewilderment. The "Indian Maize" was at the foundry, for she had decided that bronze would be the best medium for it, and, excepting her visits there, all was a new and strange world to her. The richness of her surroundings, and the clothes which Howard insisted on her getting, at first occupied her thoughts, and she accompanied him on shopping expeditions with great delight. But after a little, her interest flagged.

Her own work, because of this apathy which had fallen on her, she had not resumed, but she tried to interest herself in Howard's. She attempted to read his books. But the construction of the Egyptian language presented difficulties, and she concluded by merely studying the pictures of the angular skirted warriors, each armed with a bow and arrow, while Howard explained the phonetic characters. These, he said, were physical objects, denoting not ideas but letters — that is, sounds or articulations.

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One evening he drew her down on the arm of his chair and, showing her a column of black hieroglyphics, birds and animals and men, read from them a remarkable threshing song. At first Beulah scarcely heard him. She was filled with a mysterious admiration such as she had sometimes felt for her father when he revealed knowledge of any subject which she could not comprehend. The comparison brought a little cloud of confusion, and she extended her fingers and slightly lifted his hair. It was gray in places but very thick. How wise he was! And while he spoke, she admired the forms around his deep-set eyes and the modelling of his brow. Suddenly, leaning sidewise, she put her lips to his forehead. Under the touch of that gentle, fresh mouth, Howard looked up with increased animation. He kept her arms, in their sleeves of flowing lace, about his neck, speaking as well as he could for the delicate obstruction, and with the other hand he held the book. Book and woman, how they filled his life! And alternately he pursued the text of ancient Egypt on the printed page, and the text of recent love in those grave eyes just flecked with gold.

"It is an ancient labour song," he explained, "inscribed over a man driving two yoke of oxen, treading out a floor of corn, in a tomb at Elethya. The first word, which signifies the act of treading out, is the Coptic word of the same meaning. In all probability it was the sound uttered by the drovers to stimulate

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their animals. This explains the repetition. Like all songs of this nature in all countries, it is rude and simple.

‘Tread out for yourselves,
Tread out for yourselves,
O oxen!

Tread out for yourselves,
Tread out for yourselves,
The straw;

For man, who is your master,
The grain.’”

“It is sometimes paraphrased in English after this fashion:—

‘Heigh, heigh, oxen, tread the corn faster;
The straw for yourselves, the grain for your master!’”

As he concluded, Beulah rose. “I like the first rendering best,” she said in a low voice, and, clasping her hands back of her head with an alert, impulsive movement, she repeated under her breath, “‘Tread out for yourselves, Tread out for yourselves, the straw.’” The phrase seemed to have an inner significance for her. The next day, instead of one of the dainty new dresses, she donned her modelling-blouse and started a sketch in a corner of their sitting-room in the hotel. But for some reason she did not get on well.

From that time, puzzled by her own state of mind, she often sought Jules and remained with him for hours. He had taken a small room in a sordid neighbourhood

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in which to carry on his cameo-cutting. Beulah reproached him because he would not accept her aid, and the brother and sister quarrelled sharply. At length Howard suspected the difficulty and ordered from a jeweller a cameo necklace, with the stipulation that the work be done by Jules Marcel, and his own name, as the customer, be kept a secret. He himself fixed the price to be paid and it was enough to keep the boy supplied for a year. Beulah, who was as ignorant as Jules of the source of the order, was delighted when he told her of the commission. "You can afford now to accompany John and me to Paris," she said. Their departure was set for October, at which time Howard had business that would take him to London.

As the surest means of bringing Beulah into notice, Howard had patiently renewed his acquaintance with certain people of influence, and invitations were sent to members of the artistic and fashionable society of Rome, but the event which Beulah expected would plunge her back into the artistic current to which she was accustomed, plunged her instead into a social sea, in which the froth alone, seemingly, was artistic.

In spite of her shyness and modesty, on the day of the reception there was a dignity in her manner that challenged the frivolity around her. What had she to say to these women who moved about in rustling silks, who played restlessly with bangles attached to long neck-chains, and whose rouged lips addressed gushing speeches to her; or to those men who stared at her quite

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as much as at the group, and afterwards mingled their compliments on both? A few congenial souls were present, men and women who stood a long time before the "Indian Maize," said a few feeling words to her afterwards, and quietly departed. These persons she followed with her eyes and singled out for her attentions.

Simply but richly dressed, flushed with emotions entirely new to her, never had she looked so handsome. Even her husband, it seemed to her, was smiling in an insincere way, and in Jules, whose youth and good looks made him the centre of an admiring group, she traced the sure effect of the social poison. She had thought the slighting of her former landlord, when every other member of the American Legation was invited, would be a source of satisfaction to her. But this petty revenge, so foreign to her nature, now that it was fulfilled, meant nothing to her. A growing impatience with her new life had, indeed, prompted the action. Also, she was jealous for her work. Did she not know how exceptional it was? Her heart grew hot with indignation, and her manner colder. Her husband had made a mistake in inviting these silly people, with the majority of whom the chief thought was dress. She longed passionately for her attic, for simple clothing, for the frankness and joy of her old life where her Bohemian friends said with plain directness what they thought. It seemed to her that she did not hear in the flattering phrases that

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greeted her ears the honest appreciation she had a right to expect.

In this, however, she was mistaken, and the commission which she received a few weeks later came from a woman who had laughed and chatted as much as any other on the day of the private view.

But Beulah lacked the experience which can read below the surface. She was bewildered, stunned, piqued in her feminine vanity by these society women in whom every defect was softened, every attraction continually displayed — who directed their charms like a battery against the blunted sensibilities of their cynical companions. The result was, that she held herself aloof. But her ill-concealed scorn, above all her uncompromising naturalness, threatened to make her the fashion.

After the reception she closed the doors of the studio, rented for the occasion, and sat down before the Indian group. It seemed to her that it would never again mean to her what it had meant, and even while she excused her husband, she reproached him for urging the display. The cup of bitterness placed perilously at the bottom of each human soul, in Beulah for the first time was overturned.

She had announced her marriage to Gaston and Elizabeth in an eager note, but she had delayed writing to them more at length until after the exhibition of the group. Now she spent some hours over a letter. John Howard was a man of distinction, she explained, and

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she dwelt with pride on his achievements. Then he was very, very kind and would not only assist her in a career, but Jules also. Could not her mother and her father by this time afford to give up the shop and come abroad? She wanted so to see them. A great tenderness leapt into the inquiry. She seemed, in a sudden accession of homesickness, fairly to nestle on their breasts again — a little girl, a baby.

To Enid she delayed writing even longer, and when at last she did write, it was after they had left Rome and in answer to a letter in which Enid told of her difficulty with the Cleveland commissioners. These ladies, it seemed, thought the design for the fountain, as she worked it out, rather pagan. "This is simply because I have given the Death Angel, contrary to the usual custom, a joyous face," Enid explained. "But I consider the idea excellent." "Of course it's excellent," Beulah agreed, and she laid the whole matter before Howard.

"But why get so excited?" he remarked, with a questioning lift of his eyebrows.

"Why?" she repeated passionately. "Because of their colossal stupidity. Besides, I am particularly interested in this piece of work. I want it to be a success," she added. And then she wrote to Enid: "Be true to your art no matter if the world comes to an end — which it will not. Those women will capitulate if you are firm."

A certain defiance that had been growing in her

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crept into the tone of this advice. She answered Enid's congratulations briefly.

As it had not had to do before her marriage, the aim of her art began to declare itself, rising superior to conditions uncongenial to it. She was even more devoted to Howard than at first, but her work began to absorb more and more of her thought. This seemed inevitable. But far from indicating selfishness in one, she reflected, did it not prove that the thrilling consciousness of *gift* was, as it were, an organized and perfected being, having a separate existence within a person and living in a world of its own? Surely this *separateness of gift* characterized all persons of sustained genius, and in seeming selfishness and egotism might often be heard what is the very battle-cry of this inner tenant. The individual might know suffering and disappointment, the delights of love and the bitterness of hatred. Though unavoidably affected by these things, gift, if it was to accomplish anything, must certainly fight for its rights, its very life. She seemed a far more complex creature than three months before.

When John Howard found that it would be necessary for him to go at once to London in order to arrange with his publishers about his forthcoming book, Beulah immediately expressed a wish to remain in Paris and get to work. "You don't mind, do you?" she asked, putting a hand over his and looking closely into his eyes. The touch of those vital and capable fingertips thrilled him. They seemed to demand of him

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freedom to pursue their work. He shook his head. And she sank back in her seat, smiling and contented.

They were in a railway carriage on their way to Lauterbrunnen at the time, and he affected to sleep that she might not see how he suffered. He pulled his travelling-cloak about him and half closed his eyes. In spite of marriage, her spirit remained unvanquished by the dominion of his caresses. Like a bird, it continually escaped from him, unconsciously asserting its youthful and eager independence in little acts that stabbed him. To-day, the nature of what he termed "his crime" came home to him. The small mirror opposite, reflecting a tuft of his gray hair, testified to it, and the girl herself. What a mating! And suddenly he became a prisoner in that high, cold chamber of the soul where conscience is the chief inquisitor. Double and twist as he would, he could not escape the rack. A question was put to him. Answer it? No, not though she sat before him, remote, happily preoccupied, a living witness of his fault.

How young she was! And he fell into a moody contemplation of her. She was so capable of noble devotion, he decided, while he watched her from between his fingers, and though unawake to love herself, a whole line of loving women spoke in her. In her strong, beautiful hands was the tenderness of other women who had lived before her. In the poise of her gracious body, as she leaned forward gazing out of the window, he seemed to see them listening shyly to the vows of

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their lovers. In her quiet eyes he beheld theirs glowing with passion. And that she should be unmoved by such a love as his, even unconscious of it! A sigh broke from him and Beulah looked round. "Did you speak?" she asked.

He shook his head. And at the same moment, conscience released its hold. He gathered up their hand-baggage as the train rolled into the station.

"How tired you look," she said gently.

He glanced at her, a strange light leaping to his sombre eyes. And then he walked with soldierly erectness down the platform, his cape flying to the wind, and, as if by intention, encircling her in its folds.

CHAPTER V

A STUDIO IN THE RUE NOTRE DAME DES CHAMPS

A BOY whose loping gait conveyed an impression of hurry, earlier in the day had delivered a blue envelope at the studio at the extreme end of the garden, and then, with many hops and skips and flicks at the flowers in passing, had departed. He was of such a pleasant countenance that one hoped that the message he brought was in keeping.

That this was the case could be judged by Beulah. She stepped out on the path and, after turning the key in the lock, consulted the slip again, as if to make sure that her eyes had not deceived her. Then she advanced impulsively and laid her hand on the back of the little weather-beaten statue of an athlete. The side of his face was gone and one arm, and he was bent double, feeling his foot, as if he feared one day to miss that also.

Prompted by the extravagance of her joy, Beulah tapped him with the tips of her fingers. "Enid's coming! She says, 'Meet me Gare du Nord, nine Thursday night.' Is it not too good to believe?" This demand, uttered under the breath, was addressed

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to the whole garden, to the splotches of sunshine, to an overturned urn, to a pair of plaster legs, which, lacking a body and head, had an airy, irresponsible look, as if they might go in pursuit of the student who had created and abandoned them. Beulah was very fond of the spot, which produced only a few sickly nasturtiums and phlox to justify its name.

Now, with almost the eagerness of a lover, she pictured Enid coming and going daily through these paths which were lit here and there with a flower escaped from its disorderly confines, and were otherwise littered with bits of plaster and dead leaves. The leaves constantly falling, the *concierge's* daughter every morning swept before her into the drain, sunk into the ground, and washed away with great sluicings of water from the spigot near the entrance. This nominal cleaning up of the place always occurred at six o'clock, and later the dwellers on the court, a fantastic lot of artists of both sexes, appeared and filled each his or her kettle for coffee at this faucet.

In the middle of the plot an ash barrel disgorged its contents, powdering the branches of the lilac-bush which grew beside it and the leaves of the ivy which draped the nearest wall. Everywhere were overturned flower-pots and broken statuary, covered with moss like the athlete, who easily claimed the position of honour as being the least maimed piece of sculpture in the garden. The place, indeed, was typical of the *quartier latin*. Mean, it yet possessed the luxury that appeals most deeply

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to the fancy, a charm that arises from a mating of abortive or playful attempts at art, with the solemn greens and grays of nature. In such a garden everywhere mirth struggles with a sigh. The damp paving-stones hint at mysteries which the doorways wait in rollicking eagerness to divulge. Knock at the different portals and you feel that you will learn all the secrets of the place, secrets which represent the whole gamut of existence, its childhood, its maturity, its old age. For, stripped of its conventions, what is life but a pensive angel, hand in hand with a smiling Pan?

Presently Beulah moved down the path. "I must send a note to Richard," she reflected. "He, too, will like to meet her."

Richard Yates had arrived in Paris the preceding year, shortly after Beulah's marriage, of which he had learned just before sailing. The news had staggered him, and, had it not been for his pride before the friends who had come to see him off, he would have abandoned the plans, which had been the occasion of a quarrel with his father, and had cost him not a little self-sacrifice. As it was, he had come to the French capital sullen and disappointed.

A little later the Howards had been published in the list of arrivals at one of the American hotels and Richard had gone to call upon Beulah. But she had not been at home, and he had left a characteristic note.

"My sketch submitted at the annual exhibition at the Beaux Arts has been returned," he wrote on the back

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of his card. "Have decided to give up sculpture. However, should like to have you see some of my stuff. May destroy it later. Thursday's my day. Can't you drop in some time? Congratulations."

As soon as she was settled in her present studio and her husband had gone to London, Beulah had hunted up her old friend.

To-day, as she despatched her letter to him, the memory of their meeting swept over her and caused her to smile. How cross Richard had been on that afternoon! Though he had been glad enough to see her, judging from the kindling of his eyes, he had greeted her morosely, because, so she thought, he had caught her laughing when he opened the door. Her mirth had been occasioned by the fact that the rejected piece of sculpture, of which he had written her several days before, still well-nigh blocked the passage to the *atelier*.

It was early in the afternoon and, in answer to her knock, he had appeared like an angry jack-in-the-box. They had shaken hands, then she had pointed to the cast with the tip of her parasol. "But how are your guests to get in?" she had asked, "you are not going to force them, especially the ladies, to squeeze by that?"

In response, he had roughly pulled and pushed the cast inside, though it was evident that he preferred anything rather than giving it place in the studio. Then he had stood eyeing her from under darkened brows.

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Though they had not met for three years, scarcely a suggestion of a smile had stirred his face. He had invited her to a seat on a divan and had taken his stand a little distance from her. Time had wrought some changes in him; he was broader than he had used to be, and an imperial added a point to his square chin, which elsewhere was blue from the shaving. Above this blueness, which crept over his cheek, there was a fine mantling of colour, and his gaze had its old snap and fire. He had put on a velveteen coat in which to receive his guests, and he moulded a bit of clay between his fingers as he studied her.

Beulah, dressed in a light flowered silk, played with one of her gloves. Questions about her father and her mother and little Louis had leaped to her lips, but his gaze had rendered her dumb.

"So you are married?" he remarked finally, as if the words were wrung from him.

At his tone she had looked up in amazement. Then she had flushed. The insolence that had crept into his manner, his good looks, above all, his aggressive and lusty youth, stirred in her a sharp antagonism, the more so, as her husband's gentler presence floated before her mind. She rose precipitately, but he had been beside her and begged her pardon.

Indeed tears seemed very near his eyes. He had looked all at once extremely young. Could she not understand? And yet he feared that she would understand. If she had known it he wanted to put his face

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against her hands and tell her how he had suffered since her marriage, and still suffered. Instead, he had mastered his emotion and timidly taken the hand which she generously extended to him. He had not looked at her, at once, and when he did there was no moroseness in this second gaze. It was, rather, deeply searching. Finally, as she had met his eyes with as clear a look as in the old days, he had laughed aloud, and the sound was so joyous that she had smiled in sympathy.

She little guessed, however, that that which had taken place was a still-hunt — that in the innocent field of her woman's eyes one man had involuntarily, almost unconsciously, looked for the trail of another; not finding which, he had exulted.

From that moment their friendship had resumed its old footing. He had cleared the end of the divan of the art books and photographs that littered it, and, sitting by her side, had told her how life wagged on in her parents' shop. He had pictured it in such a way that she had seemed to be an actual part of it again. She had heard Gaston humming a cheery French tune, as he hammered a shoe, and she saw her mother rise and refill the pipe that had burned itself out on the bench beside him. She saw the twinkle in his eyes, the tenderness in hers, the look that bound them together. The sea from the land, the twilight from the night, were not more inseparable than this one man from the one woman. And ever in the vision, Louis had kept coming and going, a baby no longer but a

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boy in roundabouts. She had laughed even while she wept.

And Richard had told her of her friends; how Matthias Howe, so people said, was certainly growing too fond of his ale. He paid far more heed to the products of the press and the still than he did to those of his own lathe. It was Richard's opinion that he would soon abandon the old church and go to live with the only relative he had — a widowed niece. And he told her of Olive Lanham's marriage to an Englishman, a handsome strapping fellow with no comprehension of art. "A Philistine," he added with a smile. And when she asked him, he told her, unwillingly, of the Rahfields. Henry Rahfield was steadily failing in health. "And as for Enid, I suppose you know she's having no end of a time with those Cleveland people," he said maliciously. "They refuse outright to accept her model for the soldiers' memorial." "The more shame to them!" Beulah had cried. Richard had exhibited a spiteful satisfaction in relating this piece of news, and she was annoyed and excited. Seeing that she was actually troubled for her friend, he had admitted grudgingly, that Enid was getting a reputation out of the affair, for the papers had taken up the quarrel and the ladies of the board were getting the worst of it.

This news had so filled a want which Beulah felt, that ever since then she had turned to Richard in her hours of loneliness. They had read each other's home

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letters and exchanged opinions about the probable course of events.

Now exactly that which he had predicted on the occasion of their first meeting in Paris, had come to pass; Henry Rahfield, after a hard winter, had died of consumption, and Enid was even now on her way to Paris.

"Do you think she'll be much changed?" Beulah demanded of Richard when he appeared that evening at their apartment in answer to her note. He turned to shake hands with her husband and avoided answering.

"Beulah talks of nothing but the arrival of this friend," remarked John Howard. "She has awakened my curiosity. I'm sorry that I can't go with you to the station, but I have a business appointment. You won't mind calling for Beulah, will you, Mr. Yates?"

Richard bowed and expressed his pleasure. A certain coldness always crept into his manner in the presence of Beulah's husband. They were perfectly unlike, and a difference in age set them as far apart as two worlds.

Beulah led the way into the salon and talked the whole evening of Enid, while the two men watched her, each in his heart dispirited and moody.

"Do you think she'll be much changed?" Beulah put the question once more, as she stood by Richard's

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side in the station. Though she apparently hung upon his words, they were drowned by a confusion of answers from within herself. A thousand nameless apprehensions, suggestions, received from Enid's letters sprang to life. Her face shadowed and then brightened so vividly with anticipation, that Richard spoke roughly to her. "Enid will have developed like the rest of us, of course. For my part, I wish she'd stayed in America," he added under his breath. "Come, there are still ten minutes before the train is due, let's walk around a bit."

She put her hand through his arm, and they commenced an aimless promenade, their emotions mounting to their faces with each moment ticked forth by the great clock. Always, when together, they made so fine an appearance as to excite attention. But now they were so vivified that people looked after them, less because of their comeliness than because they could catch the aroma of the thoughts of each, as we catch the odour of flowers carried past us.

Richard scowled and held his companion's arm with tender force, and, on the pretext of steering her through the crowd, once he took hold of her gloved hand. Beulah moved at his side filled with joyous eagerness. A little black veil kept slipping down over her face and she kept pushing it back with a graceful movement of her free hand, the wrist of which, emerging from the lace of her ample cloak, gleamed a sudden ring of white. Her teeth caught the crimson of her under

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lip. When the train thundered in she gripped his sleeve.

"There she is," she cried with a soft laugh.

Enid produced an impression of smallness that clutched at one's heart strings, united with a singular dignity. She set down her leathern satchel and extended her hands to them. She was in deep mourning, but the wild poppy that seemed to burn in the button-hole of her jacket was a declaration, even in the midst of her sorrow, of the possibilities life held for her.

"Enid!" cried Beulah, as the other lifted her eyes with the languid and yet passionate motion peculiar to them. "Enid, are you glad to see me?"

The other's glance became luminous and she shook her head. They all laughed, Beulah, who had asked the question involuntarily, the most heartily of all. And she continued to cast delighted glances upon Enid and to fold the little black-gloved hand in hers as the three moved down the platform in search of a cab.

In one so naturally undemonstrative, these caresses indicated an intensity of feeling touching to witness. You felt that she was mentally gathering the charms of her friend, as she would have gathered a bouquet, taking note of each as a separate flower, and intoxicating herself with the subtle meaning of the whole.

Richard sank back into the corner of the carriage, lost in moody contemplation of the two. He played nervously with the fastening of his umbrella, and when Beulah began to relate her news, he turned brusquely

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and looked out of the window. She was like a child that, having a gift for another, cannot wait for the prearranged moment to bestow it. The model for the soldiers' memorial, she whispered, ever since its arrival in Paris had been, as Enid knew, on exhibition at the studio of Herr Schroeder, a German artist. And now could Enid guess what she had to tell? No, she never could, not in a thousand years, for it was sold! Sold! — and to no less a person than a German count.

As she repeated the word "sold," and stumbled over the count's unwieldy name, a beam from a street lamp struck across her face and showed it transfigured. But Richard could not see Enid. He felt only that a tenseness went over the little figure and he could hear her drawing her breath sharply in the darkness. Presently she leaned over and kissed Beulah, and he caught the gleam of her eyes; they were glowing like coals, inexplicable.

The sensation produced upon him was so painful that he thrust his head out of the window, thereby losing part of the conversation. When they reached the studio in the Rue Nôtre Dame des Champs, Enid had apparently thanked her friend and Beulah was disclaiming the main credit for the sale. "The German Consul had used his influence," she said.

Wrapped in his own sombre reflections, Richard followed the two women through the garden and the door closed.

The garden was no more than a gray blot, a little

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piece of evening enclosed in four walls, a field of twilight over which the little statue seemed mounted on picket-guard. When the three entered the studio, thoughts such as we are wont to attribute, and perhaps not wrongly, to stones and shadows, seemed to possess him. There they were, these three, and one other whose retreating step still lingered in a dispirited rustling along the paths, one who had come earlier and gone away. There they were and they would live their story, in that garden, even as a cluster of this year's leaves on the lilac-bush above them, to be storm-tossed and perhaps, one or more of them, beaten down.

It may have been the effect of the light which flashed out abruptly from the casement at the end of the court, but thoughts such as these, deepened by moss and time-stain, seemed written across the statue's brow.

CHAPTER VI

THE SENTENCE

"YES, I went there the day before I sailed," remarked Enid, and she poured herself a cup of coffee. Beulah had arrived before she had finished her breakfast. Sunlight through a latticed window flooded the studio. The morning's mail was scattered over the table. Beulah rested her head in her hands.

"Poor old man," Enid continued. "He sent all manner of messages to you. Just before I saw him, he had been forced to give up his shop. But he begged me not to tell you that. He wanted you to think of him as still at his lathe in a corner of the old church. His niece is a hatchet-faced woman and he seemed terribly afraid of her, because he could not pay her for the room in which he was dying."

"Well, she's paid now," answered Beulah. "Father went there, he says, immediately he received my cable. Here, read his letter," and she pushed it toward her friend.

With an attention to detail which sprang from delicacy, Gaston first accounted for the expenditure of the money which his daughter had sent him to relieve her

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old master. So much had gone for the rent, so much for the nursing and medical attention, and so much for the sad rites which had followed by a few days the arrival of aid. Not that Matthias had been actually neglected during the first part of his illness, Gaston explained, but the woman, his niece, had undone the effect of her nursing by constant haranguing. The money, however, had silenced her, and, against her convictions, she had even been prevailed upon to give the old man the alcohol the doctor prescribed.

Gaston's description showed how much he himself had been affected by the cameo-cutter's end. He did not try to conceal the fact that it had been caused by too much drink, but he asserted, none the less, that Matthias had lived the noble life. Had he not spoken at the last of many things which showed how pure was his heart, of the fields, of the blue sky, of little children?

He had believed himself, it appeared, still in the old church at his lathe, and the way his poor fingers had played on the quilt had been pitiful to see. He had cried constantly for some woman lost to him in his youth. He had babbled of Beulah Marcel and the two little children of his niece. These he had alluded to as his "little mammas" according to some play which had been between them, and on the day of the funeral Gaston had found the mites crying as they peeped at the hearse. "Oh, they're taking our baby away," the elder of them sobbed, "and we'll never see him no more, for there ain't any way back from heaven."

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And now there was something lacking among the turrets of the old church, Gaston explained with unconscious pathos, and when he passed there, he looked up at a particular window — Ah, well Beulah knew that trefoil, high-shouldered, long-skirted as a monk! — for a face that was gone.

This letter, couched in the simple words of a French peasant and written by a hand more wonted to an awl than a pen, touched her to the heart. She seemed unable to get over the effect of it, and while she mourned her old master, the cheer and joy of him, his round pink face a-smile under his tuft of white hair, all the charm of that quaint Gothic presence now gone down into the dust, — she wept at the same time for another figure, still patiently plying its craft at a bench. In brave strokes of a hammer, a-rat-a-tap-tap, and in the whirl of a lathe now silenced forever, the world of her girlhood seemed to come back to her. In an access of bitterness, she measured the distance that separated her from her old life. Never again, she reflected, would old Matthias turn a tune as he turned a cameo, and dimmed were the eyes of children in consequence, and the window of the place that knew him. And never again could she go to her father in the old simple way. What mistaken hopes, what bitter strivings, what follies the years held! Existence pressed heavily upon her.

“I will see no one to-day,” she said, lifting a tear-stained face to Enid, “only Jules. And will you please

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send this letter of father's to Mr. Howard by a messenger. Otherwise, he will come for me at one o'clock. He expects me to go with him to Versailles to-day. But I cannot. He will understand. Here, I have written on the margin that I cannot."

It was Jules's habit to lunch with his sister two mornings in the week, and lately, as she had come to spend almost her entire time at the studio, actuated by the stress of work, and by Enid's presence in the adjoining *atelier*, he came almost daily.

To-day, when he arrived, Beulah rose and caught him by the shoulders. She dwelt on every feature of his young countenance—on his eyes, clear and dark, with a touch of the wonder of infancy in them still, united with the passionate wonder of adolescence, on his nose, broad-boned and slightly spreading at the nostrils, on the innocent beauty of his half-parted, richly curved lips.

"Oh, Jules" she whispered, leaning for an instant against him, "I'm so glad that you've come."

The first abandon of her grief past, she threw herself into her work. She worked much later than usual, and Enid, through the door cut between the two *ateliers*, could hear only the slight sound of one tool laid down and another taken up. Unusual effort is contagious, and the two friends laboured silently, each in her own way, in which ways a psychologist could have read the different characteristics of the two women.

Beulah's fresh countenance was unusually pale, but

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the thought shining in her gray eyes overcame any trace of recent tears. You would only have guessed that she had lately wept by a certain intentness, a power stolen from grief, in her movements. She was as far away from further tears as a plain, drying under a scorching sun. Her mouth stood open a little in her healthy absorbed interest.

The two friends typified the two classes of workers. Beulah's work, simple and dignified, could as aptly be taken for a man's as a woman's; Enid's bore the stamp of an exquisite and high-strung femininity as its chief charm. Though it might tower over her, like a great son over the mother, there was always in it some scruple of her who had joyed and suffered keenly for it. There was ecstasy in some of the pieces, an ecstasy essentially feminine, and if there was also a carelessness of execution, it was more than atoned for by the brilliancy of the composition, which few could equal. This slackness in workmanship, daring and intentional, could scarcely be called a fault, but was rather a coquetry which made the perfections stand out all the more clearly.

Concentration in Enid passed the normal limit. She liked sounds — the loud ticking of a musical clock on the shelf — anything to keep her from throwing herself too completely into her work. Otherwise, she worked with a nervous intensity which brought on attacks of exhaustion, terrifying in their character. More than once, a long day's work had been succeeded by violent

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fits of weeping. Her work seemed to sap her life forces, but the amount of vitality in the little frame was astonishing. Unquenchable fire burned in her eyes, her long pale face became luminous in its pallor. A slight twitching of the muscles about the mouth, which would have been unpleasant in an older face, in hers seemed but the visible flicker of her emotions; as also a rigid drawing up of the shoulders and a trick of stiffly holding the chin in. All these things — exhibitions of a rigorous nervous energy leaping control — in her became charms.

To watch Enid Rahfield at her work was at once to be inspired and to be moved to fierce remonstrance. You could almost hear her heart labouring in the sweet shallow cup of her girl's breast so strenuously as to stir the long folds of her modelling-blouse — you could feel the leaping of the nerves in the delicate wrists and temples, and the great surging tide of thought in the look she poured on her work. She seemed, small as she was, like a fire, a hurricane, a maelstrom of energy, the one outlet of which was through a hand, small as a child's, veined heavily with blue. All the Graces had kissed these hands. They had the cunning and the august power of their craft. They were creators.

Sometimes approaching the point of exhaustion, but urged by the necessity of giving further vent to the enthusiasm that possessed her, she would break forth into a kind of weird and not unmusical singing. Then,

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no devotee before an altar could have been more impassioned than Enid before her own work. Or, still quivering with energy and fearing to mar that which she had achieved at a less excited moment, she sought the diverting interest of the Paris streets.

It was a proof of her powerful magnetism that Richard Yates no longer avoided her. On the contrary, he very often sought her almost against his will. And if he appeared near the close of the day, she got him to take her to drive or to walk, to this *café chantant*, or that music-hall. She made but one demand, that the surroundings be sufficiently picturesque.

In these places filled with gay-lipped, brilliant-eyed men and women, where wit flows with the wine, and relaxation comes as softly and naturally as smoke wreaths float upward, Enid was particularly at home. She was like fire amid fire. "But she burns with a different flame from the others," was Richard's comment as he watched her. Pale from weariness, but with undiminished exuberance, she propped her head on her hand and studied the faces about her. But once in a while her eyes met his and she smiled — slowly. Then he experienced a curious excitement. What an enigmatic little thing she was, with her passionate pride, and her disdain, and yet there was something in her glance sometimes that made him think — But Richard never quite dared to put the thought into words. Instead, he would lean forward with boyish impulsiveness so that his head was brought closer

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to hers, and thus, without a word, they would observe the scene.

At first Beulah, influenced by Howard's greater conventionality, had opposed these trips on the ground of propriety. But Enid shrugged her shoulders. The types interested her. Why should she not study them? And so this form of recreation grew into a habit with the three, for Beulah ended by accompanying them, partly out of devotion to Enid and partly because she felt the need of the diversion. John Howard, however, could not be induced to accompany them. The truth was, the rampant youth and vitality of the *quartier* annoyed him.

On the day in question Richard appeared about two o'clock with cards for a sculpture exhibition, and Enid consented to leave her work for an hour, but Beulah laboured on, feeling no abatement of the strength within her. When her husband arrived, he found her, not as he expected, rendered utterly unfit for work by reason of her grief, but so engrossed that her manner was more preoccupied than usual. Turning, he laid the violets he had brought her, as an expression of his sympathy, on the table. Then, in a voice dry and hard, he told her of a collection he was on the track of, and asked that during his absence, if she intended to sleep at the studio, as he supposed she would, that she kindly make a point of going to the apartment at least once a day to receive the mail.

She listened, giving a fixed, almost painful, attention

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to his directions, then when he had finished, with an unconscious sigh of relief, she called him to see her work. Not because she cared especially at that moment for his opinion, he felt, but because her enthusiasm required an outlet. He came and stood beside her, gray-haired, tense-faced, fitting his glasses into their case. His sympathy,— she did not need it! The collection of Egyptian amulets which he had heard of with such eagerness, what was that to her! He was usually dressed with great care, even with a quiet distinction which, apparently, took from his years. But this afternoon his neck-scarf was carelessly tied, his beard rough. He looked every day of his age.

Beulah stood before her work, which represented a noble maternal figure holding a child, in that glory of the mind that goes with production. "Do you think me set up about it?" she asked suddenly. "You might, you know. But haven't I as much right to be proud as she has?" indicating the clay mother. "Why, this is my child! Oh," she sighed, "if I could only be sure that it is as good as it seems to me now."

Did he not know this exaltation of the mind when we see our work hallowed as it never will be afterwards, when we either delude ourselves completely, or, as in this case, torture ourselves with unnecessary doubts?

But if he had attempted to praise "The Cup" (this being the title of the group), he would have betrayed his emotion, so deeply did its subject affect him. When

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Enid came in, she noticed the violets and the two fell to admiring them, but he did not delay.

When he came to himself the leaves in the Luxembourg gardens were crisping to his step. He sank down on a bench. Only one thing — one thing could have been worse, he thought: had she forced herself to seem interested in his affairs, had she exhibited her usual solicitude. This devotion, so nearly resembling the devotion of love, constantly tempted him into the belief that she did indeed care for him, when well he knew that every considerate action, every caress even, sprang from a staunch attempt at dutifulness. Bah, he had had enough of it. Rather indifference a hundred times! And yet such indifference as she had exhibited to-day — he grasped his cane, grinding it into the ground.

Have you ever watched the brute which lurks at the bottom of every man make its way upward until it glares at you from his eyes, make its way downward until the energy of a claw is in his hand? Have you seen it stretch and uncoil from the small centre it usually occupies in his heart until, instead of a man, you have a creature burning with the desires and passions of the jungle? John Howard could have crushed, have killed, his mate.

Even at the expense of her friends, her work, he would force her to concentrate her attention upon himself. Yes, and what then? His head drooped. Jules, Enid, Richard Yates, defiled before him — Gaston,

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her mother, and the dead cameo-cutter. Youthful or of more advanced years, they all held their rightful place in her affections. He alone had attempted a rôle which nature did not warrant. That was the truth, nature did not warrant it. "My God," he thought, "why is it permitted that the heart of a man, no longer young enough to inspire love, shall remain like this!" In spite of the passion that consumed him, he was old, done for. He thought scornfully of the violets, of the hundred little attempts he made continually to win her love. She had but to treat him as she had done this morning, and he became conscious that his lips were fledged with gray and that age sat grimly upon his shoulders.

And that reminded him of the letter she had sent him concerning her old master. He took it out of his pocket and then suddenly his heart swelled. Not because of the pathos of the shoemaker's description, but because his wife's tears blotted the page.

How loving she was, and how he loved her because she was so! Such was his passion that, notwithstanding his jealousy of Enid and his clearer reading of her, he could comprehend her charm for Beulah. He could even go so far as to understand the simple, almost child-like, nature of Beulah's feeling for himself. Young, even for her years, she could neither return nor value his devotion as a more mature woman would have done. Oh, why was it that he did not love a woman whom life had saddened slightly, whose hopes, like his own, were somewhat tempered, rather than this inexperi-

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enced being, this young girl, all eagerness and ambition?

"It is my child!" the words still thrilled all the worker, the scholar, in him, even while his man's nature dwelt longingly on that other motherhood which, indeed, was the subject of the group, and which he had once seen suggested in her; the scene, a railway carriage, their only companion a young Italian travelling with an infant but a few weeks old, returned and added its exquisite torture. Beulah, with only half-concealed tears, had watched the young fellow, whose face was still haggard from his recent loss. He had warmed the milk by placing the bottle inside his shirt, next his body. At last she had prevailed upon him to let her take the infant, and then the two men had watched her, the one in a transport of emotion, observing her instinctive mothering of it, the other with the watchful willingness of an animal that allows its young to be handled for a time with satisfaction, but after a little requires it back.

Sympathize with her as he might in her moments of exaltation, with a passion irresistible and destructive, it was the *woman*, unresponsive and hardly awake, that he loved. The rack was too cruel! His crime was confessed and he heard his sentence: to see her tenderness towards others, never towards himself, to hunger and thirst for her, as it were — to be famine-stricken in the sight of plenty: this was his punishment. He must return to the gray country of middle years from which she had wooed him.

CHAPTER VII

WHO DROP OUT

LATE on the afternoon of the same day a woman, strange to the *quartier* and yet one who appeared to be familiar with it, approached the studio. She was richly dressed, but a look of discontent marred her face, which was singularly attractive.

There was no longer a girlish quality in her figure — it was matronly and handsome, and she moved like a woman born to command, but who somehow succeeded, to her own chagrin, in ruling only in small things. Her knock on the door was answered promptly. Beulah appeared with a paper cap on her head. "Why, Olive!" she cried, and drew the newcomer inside. "I knew you must come again some day," she exclaimed, beaming upon the other, "Paris is not to be resisted, if one has ever felt its charm."

Olive smiled. "That's what I used to think. I'm here," she continued, "on a deferred wedding-journey. My name's Longman now. But I think I wrote you a great deal about Mr. Longman, once."

Beulah looked slightly disconcerted.

"Well, I married him," resumed the other, "and now

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I'm here for two weeks to buy clothes, while he's in London on business. I haunt the *Bon Marché*, and I give you my word for it, I haven't been once to a gallery. Perhaps it is because my purpose has changed that Paris has lost her charm for me."

"I suppose the things are as bewildering as ever this season," ventured Beulah. "Your hat is very becoming," and she rose to inspect it, but the other turned on her. "Drop it, Beulah Marcel," she cried. "Do you suppose I came here to-day to have you talk fashions to me? — you of all people. Show me your work. You know I used to have some small interest in such things."

Beulah reddened and, laughing consciously, crossed to her stand and whipped the cloth off the work. "It's just a sketch I'm starting," she said.

Olive came and stood beside her. The strong contrast between the two was observable. Beulah, her figure entirely enveloped in a clay-stained blouse, might have typified purpose; Olive, in her rich dress, the frustration of it. In one face force was concentrated, in the other was at present a confusion of forces.

"That group over there is the one you did in Rome, isn't it?" Olive asked. Her voice had a curious hard ring in it, and her expression was strained. "Have you exhibited it in Paris yet?"

Beulah shook her head. "I may this spring — that, or a figure which I just sent away to-day to be cut."

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Olive walked around the Indian group. "It's splendid," she remarked at last. The words were mingled with a sigh, but something of the old enthusiasm lighted up her face. "I should exhibit it by all means," she cried.

A moment before, without troubling to announce herself, Enid had entered the studio in search of a tool. Rubbing her hands over her blouse, she now advanced to meet Olive with the quick grace of motion peculiar to her. But no sooner was the greeting over, than she turned to Beulah. "So you have decided to exhibit this spring, have you?" she cried and in the question was a tinge of raillery. "Come now, that's all very well for students who want to write home of the 'great honour,' but we initiated know that the 'honour' doesn't amount to *that*!" and she flicked a bit of clay across the studio.

"It's an opportunity to get the attention of the public," returned Olive, after an instant of surprise.

Enid's lips began to twitch and her eyes to gleam with a faint sarcasm, — those eyes like dark living pools in the languid pallor of her face. "And you think she'll be repaid for her trouble?" she demanded. This group, anyway (indicating the "Indian Maize") is an emblematical, American thing — the French won't understand it; it's neither daring nor indecent." And she proceeded in brilliant, forceful style to disparage the French and, incidentally, the plan which she knew Olive had advised.

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Beulah relapsed into silence, but the colour in Olive's cheeks deepened momentarily. Both were strongly influenced and in Beulah the influence amounted to fascination, which Olive noticed indignantly, even while she herself struggled against the magnetic charm of Enid's presence. The young girl scoured with such egotistical and yet such subtle mockery that reply seemed, for the time, impossible to Olive.

But suddenly she broke in upon the other's witty diatribe. "This is all well enough for *arrivées* like you, Enid, but you see, Beulah still needs and seeks recognition."

To her astonishment, Enid remained oblivious to the sarcasm. "Yes, that's so," she agreed lightly, "Beulah has never sold anything here — her work is not known." And in conclusion, she admitted that of course the Salon was the usual avenue to recognition, though such recognition for a beginner rarely led to anything worth while.

When she had left them with a gay wave of her hand, carrying off Beulah's best tool, to which she had helped herself, Olive glanced at her companion. In both could be detected the stimulating effect which Enid's presence always produced. Beulah mechanically resumed her work; she was disconcerted and strove to conceal the fact. Olive, however, went straight to the point.

"You were the means of her getting that commission in the first place, weren't you?" she asked

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bluntly, and then, as the other affected not to hear her, "and you were the means, also, of its being sold?"

Beulah's hand trembled. "The work sold itself," she declared in a low voice. "Why, it's a wonderful thing," she cried, facing round on Olive. "Is it possible that you don't feel how marvellous it is?" she demanded. "Such exuberance, such vitality, such youth triumphant! Why, she has fairly squeezd into it all the juice and perfume and — and fire of life," she continued excitedly. "Life itself, all decked with roses, laughs at you from the lips of her angel! Life, to which death is a gay flower — a flaunted sword! Its rejection in the United States was outrageous," she cried, "they were such fools they didn't see what they were giving up," and she was launching into a fierce attack on the Cleveland commissioners, when Olive interrupted her.

"Yes, I know," she said dryly, trying not to show the excitement which Beulah's description of the group had kindled in her, "but that rejection, which you think outrageous, brought her work into prominence as nothing else could have done. Anyhow, she has a curious way of acknowledging her indebtedness to you," she concluded doggedly.

During the pause that ensued, stern and flushed, for this was the first time that Enid's attitude had been brought home to her by outsiders, Beulah continued her modelling; and Olive, with a shrug of the shoulders

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that spoke her mind plainer than any words, rose and began to move restlessly about the studio.

It was not richly furnished as her own had been, but there was more work, and as she moved from piece to piece, she let her skirts trail along the clay-stained floor without troubling to lift them. Her look of defiance had returned, and yet mingled with it was an almost painful eagerness. She seemed to drink in the place, its harmony, its litter, its glowing evidence of past art and present art. Splendid photographs of antique statues jostled newspaper cuts of work of the present day. Her fingers trembled as she turned over the pages of some magazines of art piled on the table. Presently she wheeled round.

"Do you know what it is to be starved?" she cried passionately. "That's my condition. Tell me about your husband, Beulah."

The other looked up. The pain of their previous conversation still clutched her heart. "What do you want to know about him?" she asked.

"Why, what sort of man he is that he allows you to keep on with your work in this way. My observation has been that there are only two classes of men who do this — namby-pambys and paragons. I know you wouldn't marry the former, so he must be the other."

Beulah smiled faintly. "Mr. Howard's not a paragon," she said, "but he understands, I suppose, that if a person has a gift, it demands expression. He is a writer and perhaps that is what makes him different

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from other men who are not artists in any particular line. Then too," she added with a little show of enthusiasm, "he is naturally just and kind."

Olive continued looking at her. "Nevertheless, you don't love him," was her inward comment. Aloud she said, "Yes, I see. Well, Hugh's different. He's just plain man, and as such, appeals to the side of my nature that's just plain, every day woman. But, unfortunately, I've an artist side, too. Would you mind," she continued wistfully, "if I told you the whole story? You know so much already."

The other hesitated. "Don't you think things like that are made worse by talking about them?" she said.

Olive shook her head. "I must tell some one who will understand," she declared. "I am walled in by people who condemn me for being as the Lord made me — who want to make me over."

In answer to this appeal Beulah left her work and put a kettle of water over an alcohol lamp, which action recalled to them both the afternoon spent in Olive's studio four years ago, when the conversation had been in such a different vein; then she came and sat down beside the other, who looked at her keenly. "See here," she cried suddenly, "Hugh's aunt, Mrs. Russel, has been talking to you. Confess now, am I not right?"

Beulah's surprised and confused face was sufficient answer.

"I knew it," Olive laughed. "She was with me when I looked up your address and she heard me say

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that you were a sculptor. That was sufficient. You see," she continued, "the artist in me is looked upon by all Hugh's relatives as a devil which, in his name and incidentally my own, should not be roused. At first it was different, but that's the way they feel about it now. Doubtless," she broke off sharply, "Mrs. Russel sent you her card and asked you to call, never dreaming of course but that you would be delighted to leave your work, and when you went, she tendered her request along with a cup of tea. And the request was simply that, when I came, you would talk as little about art matters as possible," and Olive threw back her head with a forced laugh. "Oh, you needn't say anything," she interjected, "I know how appealing and winning Mrs. Russel can be. She brought Hugh up and loves him devotedly. Poor Hugh, after being run after for years by American and English girls, he brought his geese to the wrong market when he married me with my Bohemian notions."

Olive's imitation of the Englishwoman's voice and manner, and her description of what had taken place, were so exact that Beulah burst out laughing. The other joined her somewhat bitterly. "Oh, it sounds funny repeated," she went on, "but I know her, and sometimes she's almost won my sympathy against myself. She's conventional to the backbone, as Hugh is too, and as I said before, she's absolutely devoted to Hugh, or she wouldn't be here now, for she hates Paris with a healthy English scorn, but as for allowing me

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to be here by myself, *jamais!* She's the sort of woman who thinks it isn't safe for a girl to walk through the streets of the *quartier* without an escort, and as for living here —"

"Well, I've come to agree with her about my work," she continued, accepting the coffee which Beulah handed her, "though at first, as they all seemed rather proud of my achievements, I tried to go on. But, gracious, you should have heard them. I was no wife at all to Hugh. I was neglecting him. I began a portrait of him, at his suggestion, which the poor boy thought fine, but it was really a failure, and because I tore it up, they said the work was undermining my health. I think it was; I was distracted by their stupidity and non-comprehension. And I gave the whole thing up, for as for painting at odd moments snatched from superintending the all-important house and attending social affairs, save me from that travesty! I will either work at my art as a man works at his, or I won't do anything with it at all. Agnolo, you remember Agnolo who worked with me and on whom I practised my Italian, well Hugh was actually jealous of the lad, so I let him go. I let everything go — all my pictures and tapestry and Italian things. I wanted nothing to remind me of the old days. Finally, I gave up the studio itself — it had degenerated into nothing but a show place — and when I did that, I said good-bye to half my soul."

"Olive!"

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"Yes, and you ask me why!" repeated the other passionately. "You sit there, secure in being allowed to follow the career you have chosen for yourself, and wonder how I could do such a thing. Perhaps you think it cost me nothing — perhaps you think —" her voice broke. "Well, I'll tell you why I did," and she rose again impulsively. "It was not, as I see you have concluded," and her eyes flashed, "that my work meant less to me than yours means to you. It meant everything, and that's why the thwarted desire to go on with it is consuming me now like a fever. It was simply that I was the less there was between my husband and me that he couldn't comprehend, the better. Now do you understand? No?" she resumed, looking closely into the other's face. "Well, then," and she turned with a superb gesture, half modest, half defiant, "it was because I — loved him."

The rich colour which had been such a characteristic of hers in girlhood flooded her neck, her cheeks, even her brow. Her eyes, which during speech always suggested intelligent jewels, were softened now to the intelligence of passion, and this difference communicated itself subtly to every part of the noble frame. She stood panting, having proclaimed her womanhood to the last letter.

But this change in her surprised Beulah. She tried to spell out the riddle. Its answer, she felt, must be discreditable to Olive, and yet, the transfiguration was

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there. She sat looking up with fascinated and uneasy eyes.

Olive read her thoughts. "Perhaps," she said, her lip curling, "you and I do not interpret love alike," but though she strove at mockery, her very words seemed to blush.

Three years before she had presented to Beulah a vision of Paris in the glowing language of an artist; now, with just as much abandon, the other side of her nature obtained utterance. Once more, under her guidance, Beulah's fancy overleaped space, a very ocean of ignorance and self-absorption, and beheld, not the exultation of an artist in a foreign and picturesque country, but the exultation of a woman in the home-land of her heart.

"I loved him enough to have killed one half my nature for him, if I could," Olive cried; "enough to have made myself over to his idea, as poor Monsieur Chauvin tried to make himself over for the woman he married. You see, my feeling was such, that I wanted to be no less and no more than he wanted me to be. Therefore, I tried to drop the artist. Now, do you understand?"

Savagery, tenderness, ecstasy, sacrifice!

Beulah had been colouring slowly. "Yes," she said, "and — I think you're glorious."

For an instant they looked into each other's eyes, Beulah beholding what seemed the whole scope of woman's love for man, Olive a mystery of awaken-

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ing and an admiration so deep that it shamed her.

"No," she said with a laugh, and something of her dignified mien fell from her. "No, I'm not glorious. And if you remember my letters, you know that I would have escaped this love if I could, but it was useless. He possessed just that combination of characteristics that made escape, for me, impossible. I don't mean," she added firmly, "that Hugh is extraordinary in any way. No, he is not extraordinary, except as abounding health, a good heart, and a thorough enjoyment of all the natural, elemental things of life, lift him head and shoulders above weaklings, and proclaim him, if not more than a strong man, at least not one jot less.

"I met him," she continued with a quick smile, "at a ball, after I had been grinding I don't know how long. He was not an artist, therefore no complexity of standards troubled him, and this very simplicity rested and refreshed me, while the homage and yet daring of his glances rendered me delirious, for every drop of my blood owned his mastery. I think I was even glad that he was not an artist, so strenuous under his tuition did my other nature become. So you see," she broke off with sudden embarrassment, realizing how far her enthusiasm had carried her, "I virtually decided then. What we may term the woman side of me was stronger, and that's why," and she made a little gesture of disgust, for a moment standing very straight, "I have no right to whimper after my art as I do. I tell you,"

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and her voice rose as the thought grew in her, "Hugh is not to blame. He is the expression of the normal and the human. But I'm like a house divided against itself. He appeals to all the woman there is in me, but for the artist there is nothing. I knew this when I married him. It was useless for him to try to deceive me, or for me to try to deceive myself. I had gone too far with my study and seen too many marriages for me not to know that it would be the end of my art. But the mistake I made was that I thought domestic happiness would be enough. I am told that it should be. But am I to blame that it isn't — that the hopes and ambitions fostered in me for twenty-four years won't die in three? Ah, I tell you," she went on, "talent in a woman is an abortion, unless it be for music or the stage. And when it has been cultivated, as in my case, it becomes a curse. Think of the poor creatures everywhere, wanting to *do* things, *be* things, and having the ability too, but balked, stopped short, because, God pity them, they are women! For where is the man that takes a woman's work seriously, at least after marriage? Your case is the exception that proves the rule."

"But do the majority of women take their work seriously themselves?" Beulah asked gently. "Isn't it almost always a temporary thing to them — I mean unconsciously?"

A flush of anger mantled the other's face. "You who know so well —" she commenced. But under Beulah's curiously intent gaze, her wrath subsided.

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She put up her hands and sat down on the edge of a chair. Presently she looked up with eyes that contained the species of hopelessness that comes from the facing of any inevitable fact in nature.

"I suppose that's the very pith and kernel of the matter," she said heavily, "though I never confessed as much before, even to myself. There was a lack of seriousness because, in my secret heart, and in spite of my brave moments, I distrusted myself. I scorned being a woman. Indeed, I believe I feel towards our sex as many men feel towards us, as Hugh undoubtedly feels, that our efforts must always be feeble as compared with a man's. In my moments of looking my soul straight in the face, I went even further. I felt that my sex was of less antiquity than his. I can't account for this fancy except by the fable of Adam's having been created first and Eve as an afterthought, to be his helpmate, and not to have an individual purpose, except as it contributed to his. I say that this is the only way that I can account for the feeling, though perhaps it is due to the fact that only within the last fifty years has woman asserted herself. She is altogether newer than man; she is the inferior animal. Have you ever been possessed by these thoughts, Beulah, to the paralysis of your own efforts?"

The younger woman shook her head.

"In other words," interrupted Olive, "you do not injure your work by constantly doubting the reliability of the instrument. While all of us who question our

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own fitness are forced to drop out of the race because of our self-distrust, and, yes, because we have placed something else first. We have hampered ourselves, and men as well as women do this, with families, with business cares, with social duties, with something, it doesn't matter what, that is sufficient to overthrow us in the race. It is all a question of choice, after all. Ah," she concluded, glancing out of the window, "this is most dramatic, for here is my little girl now. I told the *bonne* to bring her at four o'clock."

Beulah opened the door quickly and the pair entered, the smiling and becaped peasant woman with her hand placed against the back of the shrinking child. But this momentary shyness disappeared under Olive's maternal kiss, and the little one turned to Beulah, who went down on her knees and took hold of the clinging roseleaf fingers. The child had grave eyes in which already thought shone like a star, deepening the morning blue of them, and the red, tender lips were parted. It was as though the little creature drank in impressions, even as she drank in milk. Her brow, sensitive and of a rare breadth, was bared of the flaxen curls that its intelligence might be the more noticeable.

The quick tears sprang to Beulah's eyes. "She makes me think of Louis."

Olive, who, forgetful of the judicial attitude she had meant to observe, had been devouring the child with her glance, now looked at the other curiously.

And after that she adopted a different tone, a more

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satisfied one. "Yes," she said in summing up the matter before she went away, "it is all a question of choice. Some of us choose what will give us one form of happiness, and some of us what will yield another form. In both cases the sacrifice and the reward are about equal I fancy. You who stay in the race, men and women, while you have your triumphs and the joy of your work, you saddle yourselves with cares and anxieties. Yours is a life of constant unrest for you never wholly belong to yourselves, but to the public. While we who have dropped out, though we may have thwarted ambitions starting up to mar our happiest moment, still we have more peaceful lives and on the whole, I suppose, more contented ones."

And when she kissed Beulah good-by, her reflection of three years before: "She'll win out, all right," repeated itself.

But Beulah's thought of Olive was changed.

She stood in the studio door watching the little group, and when Olive took the child jealously from the nurse to carry it herself, Beulah shook her head.

"She will never be an artist again, that's sure," she thought, "but perhaps she's just as well off."

And then, for some reason, she sighed.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCERNING THE DANGER OF FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN ONE MAN AND TWO WOMEN

BEULAH closed the door and, going back to the sketch, began mechanically to wring out the cloths. She paused an instant to look at her work, but her mind was preoccupied, and when the sketch was safely swathed, she sank down on the edge of a chair. There was a bit of clay on one shoe and as she flicked it off, the gleam of her wedding-ring caught her eye. It brought before her a vision of her husband and, in spite of herself, she began moodily to review their life together. They were not a very romantic pair, that was certain, but they were excellent comrades. And surely that was something. Then what made Howard so restless? He spent so much time at museums, and when not occupied with his books, seemed devoured by a bitter ennui. Was it possible that he was dissatisfied with her? Would he have been happier, for instance, if she gave up her art? she asked herself. No, he wished her to keep on with it, distinctly wished it, and as to being dissatisfied with her, she never did anything for him, the least little service, but he expressed his grati-

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tude. Why, only an evening or two before when she had finished helping him correct some proof, he had seized her hand and pressed it against his eyes, and she had felt them wet beneath her fingers. He had said that she was too good to him. Then what was the trouble? Why, nothing — nothing at all. They were as happy, she supposed, as most people, and Beulah suddenly shrugged her shoulders. Certainly her own marriage was a hundred times preferable to the kind Olive had made. And she turned abruptly to thoughts of Olive. She had never been given to probing her consciousness concerning her own feelings.

That Hugh of Olive's was, without doubt, big and black and masculine — too masculine, with dark eyes flashing inconceivable magnetism from under heavy brows, and a lip that proclaimed good-humoured mastery in every smile that played along its handsome curves. And he wore a slight moustache and an imperial. But at this point, detecting the trend of her imagination, Beulah smiled. For sometime she had understood the meaning of Richard Yate's attitude towards herself. He was either timid and beseeching, or morose. Sometimes he would get angry on the slightest provocation, but, not knowing just what to do, she had accepted the fact in an unconsidering way, which more than anything else proved the influence of the *quartier*. Olive, however, had succeeded in giving to the whole subject of love a most vital significance, and presently Beulah rose and passed to the open window. A long

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arm of the lilac-bush descended near to her, and without knowing why she did so, she reached forth a hand and pressed a spray of the heart-shaped leaves against her face. She kept her eyes closed as beneath a caress.

Whenever he saw her, she reflected, taking up the train of her thoughts while the evening air lifted the hair from her forehead, Richard poured out everything in his life, creditable and discreditable, in an attempt to move her. Just as freely as he told her of any triumph in his work, he told her of the student balls he attended. Paris had made its sure appeal to Richard, but though its spirit of frolic had entered deeply into him, it would never quite overthrow him. His was a steady enough character at bottom, but he was young, and his blood went to the prevailing measure while the heart pounding against his side sounded a very rataplan of strength and pleasure. He was not one to heed the injunctions, "Taste not," "Touch not." He must taste, touch, all, but the result would not be permanently damaging, and Beulah was never moved to any great concern about him. Moreover, he had endeared himself to her by an act that nothing could lessen.

When Jules had begun to study at the Beaux Arts, his modesty and shyness had made him the victim of the other students. They could not understand the natural fineness of his manners, and his life had been made a torture, until one day, Richard, who had guessed the truth, appeared at the school. Purposely ignoring the old custom, he had persistently kept his

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hat on when he entered, nor would he remove it when various voices cried: "Hats off!" This had precipitated a row in which he and Jules had fought the whole *atelier*. How they had fought, gripping and rolling, until Richard, fearing he should kill some one, as he afterwards confessed, had allowed himself to be put out. As a result, for three weeks he had carried an eye blacker than nature meant and an arm quite useless in a sling. And Jules ever since had been treated with marked consideration at the school.

Yes, she was fond of Richard and for a few moments longer Beulah kept her eyes closed, indulging a fancy half idle, half wistful; but suddenly she opened them and turned from the window with a laugh. She even passed her hands across her forehead in a little confusion. "Didn't she have plans for Richard?" and she started towards the door which opened into the adjoining studio. But half way across the room, the recollection of Enid's words and bearing during Olive's call swept over her and she stopped short. It was not the first time that she had observed this attitude of egotistical triumph in Enid, though she had ignored it. Oh, why had Olive, now that Richard was silenced, come to give point to that old doubt?

She fidgeted and wavered for some little time. But an hour later she was dining with Enid.

The young girl was very tired and during the pauses of the meal, she rested her cheek on her hand. In this childish and weary pose, — now and then shaking the

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fringe of the candle-shade with a thoughtful finger, there was nothing about her to suggest the disagreeable impression of the afternoon. "I'm like an ant," she remarked, pursuing her reflections aloud and smiling at Beulah from time to time with heavy-lidded eyes, "an ant on the side of a mountain. The chances are, I'm too small and too weak to reach the summit. However," and she roused herself, "I shall keep on crawling with a manner. With a manner, that's the secret!" and she tapped the table smartly, while from her pupils, which suddenly spread like pools of ink over the dark irises, flashed a gleam that completely transformed her. "Then it seems to the world that you are winning the heights in strides — leaps," she concluded, "in reality, God knows, you drudge for every inch. Come on, let's hear some music. Life's short!" And lifting a finger, she signalled the waiter.

As they were leaving the restaurant, a certain little creamery in the Rue Léopold Robert much frequented by American students, whom should they meet on the lookout for them but Richard? And then was inaugurated one of those evenings which were Enid's delight. They went first to the *Café Rouge* for the concert. Here the sad music breaks your heart, and the mad glad music puts the very devil into you — to use Richard's expression — unless, indeed, he be there already. But on this particular evening the music which came in a *basso-profondo* groan from the deep chest of the violoncello, wailed over the heartstrings

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of the little violin, and fell in notes like tears from the flute, was so helplessly, hopelessly human in its questioning, that the three friends were driven out before it. It was like a swelling chorus of men's, women's, and children's voices asking the *why* of the world.

Enid shook her head quite desperately as if she would like to free herself from the haunting strains along with the curls of tobacco smoke that clung to her hair, and proposed a livelier place. So they went forthwith to a certain café near the Panthéon. No sooner were they seated outside at one of the little tables than an inebriated person drifted by. It was the time of the Dreyfus agitation, Cavaignac having just resigned, and the newcomer asserted that he had once fought a campaign with Cavaignac.

The crowd laughed. "That isn't so!" they retorted.

He, however, repeated the statement, adding wildly that Cavaignac had a medal which he, himself, ought to have had.

"That isn't so!" they again retorted.

At which he became infuriated, and though the connection with the matter was not apparent, insisted that he had not only known Cavaignac, but Cavaignac's mother, and that she was a fine large woman.

And this so delighted the crowd that their laughter fairly drove him away, and he disappeared into the night, muttering savagely.

And from this place our little party, still following

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Enid's lead, went bowling up to Montmartre in a cab. Here, gay, restless, daring, Enid pushed into the different places, scarcely waiting for Richard to take a preliminary survey. *Heaven*, he said firmly, was impossible, but they went into *Hell* for a few minutes and the place with its red lights, its pictured demons, and tortured creatures was childish to Beulah, and would have seemed ridiculous, had it not been for Enid. Richard smiled constantly in amused admiration of the younger woman's enthusiasm, though it was on the quiet Beulah that he bent his occasional shy and tender glances.

Guided by the genius of observation Enid studied with a clear eye these types of a low social state, but more than the light of the student shining in her countenance was that other quality that makes a woman's face eternally different from a man's and infinitely more touching — that fragile sensitiveness that God stamps at moments on every woman's face. On Enid's little countenance it was marked clear as she listened to music. A girlish sadness, a luxurious melancholy seemed to wake in her, and a sad little smile, as unconscious as it was strange, came to blossom on her lips, quieting the usual eager tremor of them. At such moments, if she chanced to meet Richard's glance, the faintest flush would tinge her cheek. It was as if, through her coldness and pride, her womanhood started up into sudden consciousness.

But, alas, there were other traits in her which cir-

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cumstances conspired to make more evident. The next day a note arrived from Olive. She wished to arrange an informal reception, at which to introduce Beulah and Enid to some of her aunt's friends. "Among these," she wrote, "a certain Lady Dinsmore is sure to be present, whom it may prove to your advantage to know. Come early and bring Richard Yates if you can get hold of him. As yet, I have not had the good fortune to see him."

Thus it fell out that the two girls interrupted the usual routine of their work and, as it happened, their friendship; for Olive took pains to have Beulah stand next to her and when the latter left this place of honour for a moment, Enid slipped into it—a manœuvre which Olive, after her first surprise, observed with a certain grim satisfaction. Though she continued to speak of the work of both, she made no attempt to frustrate Enid's plan to centre attention upon herself. So they stood through the long afternoon in the close flower-scented room, a bowing, smiling line, Olive's aunt, a small conventional Englishwoman, at the head. Mrs. Russel was not pleased at being obliged to introduce the two young artists to her especial world, and there was a certain defiance in her manner of giving her white-gloved hand to the guests. Olive was filled with a fierce resolve that Beulah's eyes should at last be opened; Enid, with cool calculations. As for Beulah, she was flushed with anger, miserable past belief.

Enid's work having been on exhibition, was familiar

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to some of the guests, while Beulah's was utterly unknown in Paris. Further, Enid was gifted with a quick conversational ability, which Beulah entirely lacked. Now, wounded to the quick, her pride up in arms, she grew tongue-tied, and as the afternoon advanced, became quite secondary; no match at all for the vivacious girl beside her.

Not that Enid boldly thrust herself forward. She contrived to give to her manner a bright modesty, making frequent pretty allusions to her friend, and apparently striving to draw her out, but these attempts were, in reality, calculated to thrust Beulah further into the background and to heighten Enid's charm in the eyes of the guests. Lady Dinsmore, the portly patroness of art, was especially delighted with her, and learning her mania to visit unusual places, insisted on carrying her home that she might make one of a party who were going that evening to a certain little theatre on the boulevard, a favourite resort, just then, of the fashionable world.

Beulah, with Richard at her elbow, was silent all the way back to the studio. She had surprised a significant glance between him and Olive when they made their adieux and her bearing was not calculated to encourage rashness. Nevertheless, when they reached 34 Rue Nôtre Dame des Champs, he did speak.

"I hope now," he said, looking her bravely in the eye, "that you see Enid's not one to tie to."

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Poor fellow, the next moment he found himself alone in the garden.

Beulah locked the door and seating herself on a divan, began pulling off her gloves with violent jerks. Then she removed her hat and rested her elbows on her knees and her face in her hands. She wanted, she told herself, never to see Enid again. At the end of the quarter she would give up the studio and take one in another part of the city. She would decline to go anywhere with Enid. These resolves furnished her a species of sombre relief, though she knew at the time that she would never carry them out — knew this as well as she knew it twenty-four hours later.

Work was over the next afternoon when Enid sauntered in, touched with that mysterious and slight insolence that now seemed always to breathe from her and that rendered her the more magnetic to Beulah. She was evidently so weary that it was an effort for her to carry herself erect, but she did; her bearing was even a little rigid.

"We're to have supper at that place on the *Champs Elysées* where Mr. Howard took us one night," she explained with a gay smile. "Just Olive, Richard, you, and I. It's my party. You can't refuse!"

Refuse! Beulah began taking off her long apron at once.

This supper, it is safe to say, Enid could afford as little as the average young artist of the *quartier*, but periods of reckless extravagance were apt to descend

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upon her. She delighted in flinging sous from a cab and watching street children scramble for them, in open almsgiving, and, all too frequently, in these lavish hospitalities to her friends, which made serious inroads upon the little hoard of interest money which she received from her father's life insurance.

Yet, running side by side with this streak of kindness and generosity in her nature—but why forecast? Beulah did not. She tried to blind herself anew after every revelation; she turned a deaf ear to all warnings, even to the warnings whispered in her own heart that such comradeship as existed between the three of them could not last. Sometimes she wished that Richard would look less often at herself and more often at Enid, and this, chiefly, because of a strange gleam which she caught in Enid's eyes, a gleam hard enough to be the rock on which the happy comradeship might easily go to pieces. Two women and one man constitute a trio difficult to maintain.

The plan had been to dine out of doors, but as the evening was chilly they were forced to retire to the pavilion which overlooks the large lighted enclosure. But whether in *plein air*, or under this semblance of a roof, the place is brilliant enough with its strings of lights, winking derision at the stars, its trees, which have the look of trees on the stage, the foliage is so distinct, and its host of diners, men with shining shirt fronts and women whose gay toilets look gayer under the electric bulbs.

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As Enid was giving the dinner, Olive and Beulah, without question, took the places of honour, those overlooking the café, and Enid was forced to seat herself beside Richard, with her back to the room, an undesirable position if you happen to be a bit vain, to Enid intolerable. And her uneasiness was so apparent that Beulah motioned for her to come over and take the place in the corner. Thus they sat, three in a row, facing their solitary escort.

On such occasions Enid always assumed a manner pompous and doubtfully courteous. She tossed an order to the waiter and glanced around the café, — a sort of feminized Louis the Fourteenth, for affected grandeur and insolence. But vanity in one of her talent could be readily condoned, it was an essential part of her temperament, and without it, Beulah reflected with a slight smile, that audacious vitality would not have been so noticeable. As it was, gay, spirited, jaunty, her head held high, her nostrils slightly distended, she seemed to proclaim the joy of life. Her vanity was even very fine. Had that been all! But the time of revelation approached, and Beulah could no longer remain blind, try as she would in that stupid way of hers, which, however, had given to her face such a look of trust that its beauty was unusually satisfying. Now that expression was to disappear never fully to return.

It soon became apparent that Enid was in one of her moods of almost dangerous excitement. A little

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dash of pleasure, followed by a day of furious work, and the effect could be counted upon, either depression, or this fierce exultation. She was witty, droll, fascinating, and gave such a vivid, really brilliant description of the little theatre to which she had gone the evening before, that her listeners, from sheer admiration, were silent a moment after she finished; whereupon she broke out in her own applause. "Bravo! Bravo!" she cried, clapping her hands,—a performance so altogether charming that her little audience were quite carried away.

Had she stopped there!

But, full of herself, she launched into a description of her success with Lady Dinsmore. The Englishwoman had said that no one but an American could have *arrived* so young, had paid her all sorts of extravagant compliments, had hinted at a possible commission. And the memory of these things, rather than the glass of champagne which she balanced delicately in her fingers, intoxicated the girl. The inconceivable part of it was, that this egotism fascinated rather than repelled, doubtless because of her magnetism. But suddenly there came a moment when Beulah heard no more.

All this, and not a word of acknowledgment, and before Richard and Olive, who knew everything!

She raised her head and her eyes met Enid's. An instant's flash of antagonism and defiance!

Her glance fell.

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Enid's words flowed on mingled with laughter. At the table next theirs the elderly, overfed Frenchman, having finished his dinner, was deliberately staring at their little group. Also, the young man who was dining with his rouged mamma and his two flaxen-haired little sisters, he was looking their way. She wondered if they had both seen. A flash of lightning reveals so much.

Enid could not bear to owe anything to her, that was what it meant; in fact, hated her because she had helped her.

While the music was wooed out, and shaken out, and beaten out of the different instruments by the red-coated members of the Hungarian orchestra, she tried to formulate the reason for this strange thing, which had always been apparent, even as long ago as the casting of that first little figure. It must be, she concluded, and the effort at concentration was painful, that Enid considered that the accepting of a service placed her in an inferior position to the one who rendered it, and as she did not consider herself inferior — Yes, it was all quite plain. Enid's was a nature that could not receive, while her own delighted in lavishing. It was pitiable, the thought, that two natures, so opposed, should have been thrown into such close contact.

About them were countless other little groups, all smoking and eating and laughing, and among them moved the quiet waitresses in their black dresses and white caps, with their little cards on which they kept

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track of the orders and tucked under the tablecloths for safe-keeping. But instead of this scene, what Beulah saw was an attic studio and a frail, wonderful child in the midst of it.

And this vision accompanied her all the way home, through the Place de la Concorde with its statues sitting in quiet conclave, and Cleopatra's needle holding the light-sprinkled heaven to the light-sprinkled earth by a subtle stitch, under the arches of the Louvre, over the Pont Neuf, and even up their quiet street. She was more conscious of it, indeed, than she was of the real Enid; than she was of Richard, though, after Mrs. Longman had left them, as the bracket seat of the cab was decrepit, he had taken the place beside her, and she could feel the quick beating of his heart. This comforted her in the midst of her great loneliness. She knew that he understood and that he talked, as he was talking, to cover her silence. Once he pressed the elbow resting against him and in what he said she detected an undercurrent of sympathy. But Enid, with averted face, her profile outlined against the open window, gave him short answers, and when they reached home, both women made no delay in saying good night. Indeed Enid, in the haughty reserve that had fallen on her, merely nodded.

Beulah, however, had scarcely closed her door, before she reopened it. "Richard!" she called, and as he turned back, she ran to meet him. But his were impetuous strides, and suddenly on the path that was

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bringing them together, she wavered. "The letters," she added quickly, for they had called at the apartment for Howard's mail, and in a tremor of alarm, she threw out a hand.

Too late. He grasped the lace-sheathed arm. Through the spring gloom his eyes were fixed on her mouth. She swerved aside, but with her large hat pushed awry, the odour of crushed violets mingling with the fragrance of her hair, he caught her to him.

"Beulah!" he whispered imploringly. And holding back her head and throat, their eyes meeting in all the confused trouble of the *quartier*, he pressed his passionate, trembling lips to hers.

The little statue continued with glance cast down, but, a few feet away at the end of the garden, there was a slight sound.

Beulah, a moment later, with shrinking awkwardness, lit a candle. The flush which dyed her face vanished, and the gleam of shame and excitement in her eyes was lost. With an expression of utter tragedy she stood regarding the door of communication between the two studios.

It was closed.

CHAPTER IX

THE SPIRIT OF THE RACE

It was only on rare occasions that John Howard's mind entirely forsook his work. Some remote corner of his brain was ever occupied with Egypt, her possibilities and her history. Enid, however, could always compel his unwilling attention. Now he wore an expression at once alert and weary as he rose from the divan. "I am sure she came in then," he said. "I hear voices."

"Voices?" repeated Enid with a slight start. "They are probably from Miss Young's." However, she crossed the room. A week had passed since the memorable evening when she had locked the door between the two studios, and it had not been used since, but now she lifted the latch. "We can just peep," she said, "it may be a prospective patron."

She opened the door an inch or two, but closed it again silently. John Howard had followed and stood watching her. "Who is it?" he asked.

"I want you to look at my work," she cried and laid hold of his sleeve. This action was so unlike her as to surprise him.

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"Another time," he returned, "and thank you very much. I have waited so long I have only a few minutes left. Do you suppose, if I went in, it would annoy Beulah?" he asked, taking a step forward, but Enid, her face filled with a strange significance, sprang in front of him, and at that moment Richard Yates's voice came to them through the panel.

With a glance that stung like a lash, Howard stepped forward and would have thrown the door wide, had she not, with inconceivable strength, prevented its opening more than a few inches. But through this aperture was visible Beulah, and beside her was Richard Yates with his face bowed on her hands. The misery and abandon of the half-kneeling figure were unmistakable, but Beulah stared over him, petrified. Though she saw her husband, it was Enid's face, white as death, the eyes blazing with malicious purpose, that transfixed her.

Then the door was forced to, and Enid turned away with what was intended to convey an impression of delicate sympathy, the air of one who had tried to shield her friend and had failed.

But Howard was not observing her.

A curious cloud floated before his eyes and he staggered slightly like a wounded man. Still, it seemed to him that he had known from the first that just this must happen, had known that it was part of his punishment. He straightened himself and, without a sign to Enid, knocked sturdily on the door.

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His manner, when Beulah admitted him, was the same as usual, though he avoided looking directly at Richard Yates. But, wrapped in his own misery, Richard had seen nothing, and when Howard began going over his pockets for some papers he wished to leave with his wife, the young fellow took occasion to slip away. He had with him a field-easel and a paint-box, having just returned from Barbizon, whither he had fled precipitately a week before.

Beulah searched her husband's face as if she would wring his thoughts from him.

"When those plates come from the engravers," he said, "just send them all to me in London."

She nodded.

"And you needn't bother about sorting my mail."

"It's no bother."

"Just redirect it all to me," he continued. "I shall be gone some time this trip."

She started. "How's that?" she cried quickly.

"I must be getting old," he said with what was a pathetic attempt at a smile, "but I find I dread that channel crossing. I shall remain until the book is out."

She understood then, and a cold stillness seemed to settle over her. Her eyes followed his every movement as he closed and locked his portmanteau. When he picked up his hat — "You are going to take dinner with me?" she asked.

"I can't. My train goes directly. But Yates will

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take you," he added, for he had not noticed the young man's departure. And then he said something about their going to *Robinson's* where dinner is served in a tree. His manner was kind, even eagerly so, but he was very pale and, when he went, he did not kiss her, merely waved his hand, which shook slightly; then hurried down the path.

She stood just as he had left her, drawn up to her full height. Her eyes, usually so sweetly absorbed, so over-filled with dreams as to give her the ingenuous look of a child, were bright now with a baleful light. He doubted — *dared* to doubt her! And Enid! Intuitively, she had comprehended Enid's manœuvre to give dramatic significance to the situation. And now at the recollection, something within her that had hitherto upheld her, seemed to break, and she sank in a piteous heap on the floor.

Strangely enough, her first thought, after all but dull despair was washed from her heart, was of Richard. "Why was she not angry with him?" she asked herself. It bewildered her a little that she was not, since it was because of him that her husband distrusted, and Enid — a quiver passed through her entire frame, but she sat upright, her fingers spread wide on the floor, and thus braced, she whispered the word experimentally into the silence, *betrayed!* Enid had *betrayed* her.

With dulled eyes and shaking half-opened lips, she waited the result. But no, she could not grasp it, and she turned again to Richard. Strangely enough, she

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felt only an infinite pity for him. Poor Richard, he had said that he suffered. Well, she suffered, though for exactly what she did not know. She ought perhaps to have foreseen more clearly. Still, had she not acted uprightly? Wherein had she knowingly failed?

So utterly was she broken that all power to reason seemed to have left her and she shook her head wearily.

Her face during the last hours had lost the old independent meaning that constituted part of its beauty. She who had always trusted and been trusted, discredited and forsaken! The very framework of her nature, which a week before had received a severe shock, was, as it were, dislocated now. She was uncertain and become strange even to herself.

And in the morning she wrote to Richard, but it was owing purely to this spiritual maiming; she would not have appealed to him otherwise. But, save Jules, who was too young, Richard was the only one to whom she could turn, and her need of him was so great. Also, a certain resentment towards her husband dictated the action, for as yet she felt no pity for Howard, that would come later. Instead of shielding her, had he not always left her peculiarly alone, and now, when she had need of his protection and he knew it, had seen it, had he not voluntarily left her exposed to the importunities of a lover, fairly flung her into his arms?

She had always accepted Howard's affection without

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question, but would he have acted thus had he cared? The earth seemed to shake under her feet and a sickening grief which she could not explain, mingled with her surprise. No, Richard was the only one, and so, like a forsaken child, ignoring her own command that he should not come again, she sent for the young man.

Richard in sagging coat and breeches, his muscular throat bare, was at work in a discontented fashion in his *atelier* in the Impasse du Maine. He had slept but little and his nerves were the worse for it. Now as he prodded a lump of clay, he alternately condoned and execrated himself for the act that had led to his dismissal. About Howard, he concerned himself not at all, deeming that he had overinfluenced the inexperienced girl when he persuaded her to marry him. His one thought was of Beulah.

Well, she had trusted him too far, that was all. He was only a man, didn't pretend anything else. Still, her adorable friendliness; how in the face of the dear old comradeship, had he dared to overstep? Well, he had sacrificed everything, and it served him right. He would clear out of town for another week. In the country one had sufficient room in which to repent properly; besides, there the element of temptation was absent.

When Beulah's note was handed to him, however, he brightened amazingly; then paled under his beard. So at last Enid was revealed, at last the blow had fallen and in this common wretched fashion, the petty, scarcely

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perceptible, trickery of a snake. Oh, the little devil! The little venomous serpent! And Beulah, the poor, poor, girl!

In his disgust and rage and sympathy, the great fellow was beside himself. Did he not know the depth of this friendship? Had he not often enough been jealous of it? He searched wildly for his collar, slipped on another coat, and after possessing himself of a tiny packet, which he took from his desk, he rushed out, calling as he went for a cab. A desire for revenge mingled hotly with his sympathy and made his pity supportable. "Damn it, he would tell her now, though he wished to heaven that he had told her in the first place and so saved her this." But Enid had gradually beguiled him too, and he dragged scornfully at his beard. Of his own position, of Howard's, he thought nothing at all.

When he entered she was sitting before the first little sketch of Enid as "Success," which she had always treasured. She was so like her usual self, and yet so unlike, with that frank trusting quality stricken out of her, that the young man paused on the threshold, choking like a schoolboy. Then he went over and took her hand. For a time neither spoke and both looked at the little plaster statuette. Finally, however, he broke the silence. "Have you never thought," he blurted out, "that it was curious how that thing came to fall?"

There was such a weight of dogged determination in

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the question, that her eyes instantly sought his face and she began to tremble.

"Well, I'm going to tell you," he continued. "I was on the point of it many a time, but you were so up in arms at the least word against her, I never could. And gradually the impression dulled. I found this on the day of the catastrophe," and, taking from its wrappings a bit of clay, he pushed it towards her across the table.

Stamped plainly in the dry surface were the minute initials E. R.

"You gave her a ring, do you remember?" he went on. "It was large for her then and the seal, consequently, was nearly always on the inside of the hand. There were several of these impressions in the wet clay that day. I simply brought this piece away as proof — evidence. You remember she was very ill afterwards. She must secretly have come in town — Beulah!" he cried.

With shoulders raised, chin dropped, the damning fragment shaking in her two hands, she was staring at him. But suddenly her head sank.

Why had he told her? Good God, what had possessed him! for it was brought to his miserable consciousness that the wrecking of an ideal, however insecure, might mean more than the wrecking of the most precious bit of work ever raised.

In his remorse and fright he got down on his knees beside her. He almost wept. But, as on that other occasion, there was nothing he could do or say. He

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merely ventured to press his trembling lips to her hand. Then, casting upon her a wretched and uncertain glance, he went away and left her alone.

She sat very still after he had gone. She seemed to realize less that way. But at last she lifted her head and found to her faint surprise that it was almost night. She looked slowly around the room and finally she looked at the statuette.

It stood there wrapped in shadows. She looked at it dully at first, then with a curious intentness. Her parched lips moved and in her fingers there was a nervous twitching. Heavens, how she had worked on it! And this thing, still warm from her touch, all keen with young hope, Enid had destroyed.

Suddenly she raised her hands to her head.

"No forgiveness! For such a crime, no!"

These words, with the sharpness of a report, seemed spoken in her head. Then her long sensitive hands dropped on her knees and once more she stared at the work.

It was like Enid, she decided. Yes, a good likeness. But where was her friend? Why, that Enid had never existed!

Her love had been such that whenever she looked at her, it had risen straight from her heart to her eyes, had produced, in fact a kind of blindness. But now this was removed, and she saw with the terrible distinctness, with the uncompromising clearness of Olive, of Richard, of the rest of Enid's world.

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Untouched by these reflections, the little figure returned her gaze with the old inscrutable smile. She leaned forward and examined it minutely. Commencing at the feet, lightly but firmly poised, her eyes crept upward over the limbs. These, delicately outlined by the drapery, were of a certain cruelty of finish. In the turn of the slim wrist clasping the globe, was the same subtlety, more than strength, and the face! — the whole meaning of the portrait, wrought faithfully and in ignorance of its real significance, flashed over her.

Inscrutable smile, narrowed eyes, she read in them now the soul of one who would use every power at their command, who would intrigue, betray, trip up a friend, if necessary, to win the goal first. Success, indeed, it was rightly named, but not the success that would turn and take another by the hand; and at the recollection of her childish ideal, she made a little gesture of mockery. No, no, it was rather that cruel, insatiable spirit of the world, where everything disappears but the idea of the goal and the rivals. Fierce rivalry, not friendship, burned in such a heart! ambition urged it on! to race, to outdistance, to win whatever the cost!

Suddenly her senses whirled. The little statue seemed to live! A draught like the hot breath of runners struck across her face. It was Enid — Success — The Spirit of the Race.

BOOK III
THE GOAL

CHAPTER I

CONTESTANTS

WHEN Jules came to the studio he found Beulah half fainting and so lost in misery that she could only cling to him. There had been no death among her friends since old Matthias had passed away, nor was anyone in her immediate circle ill, nor was she ill herself. This much he made out. To everything else she shook her head, while her breast heaved with convulsive sobbings whose violence seemed to rend her whole body. So, in his perplexity, he did the very best thing possible, laughed at her, helped her on with her jacket and hat and at length got her to go out with him. And during the several days that followed, in which he devoted all his spare time to her, not once did he allow his young puzzling to get the better of him. He kept his inquiries to himself and gave her the most brotherly sympathy in the world. Then, unfortunately, came the time set for his vacation and he must either take it or lose it. So, urged by Beulah, who had to all appearances become herself again, he went away with another cameo-cutter and a painter chap or two, and Beulah was left to miss him very much, as she

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missed all the rest of her little world. Towards Enid she was implacable. Otherwise, she seemed stunned. She believed she had lost the power to feel.

At 34 Rue Nôtre Dame des Champs lived a pathetic little English woman of whom mention has not hitherto been made. Come fifty times to the garden and you would never see her but on the fifty-first, you might. She lived in a little lodge over the rooms of the *concierge*. Through her small front window she caught all the noises of the outside world, and when the street *garçons* grew boisterous at their play she was convinced that they did so solely to annoy her.

She translated an occasional French story into English, and a poor enough living she made by it, otherwise she occupied herself with the occult sciences. Books were her only companions. Once, hearing herself alluded to as "that little person —" she had wheeled about with the remark, "I am not a 'little person,' I am Brain!" And "Brain" she was called by the few people who knew her.

In appearance she was small, nervous, and dilapidated past belief, from the light hair that fell in wisps on either side of her thin, faintly pretty little face, to her ragged shoes and trailing dress-bindings. To this forlorn source Beulah was reduced for companionship.

Hitherto, healthy and normal, she had felt merely compassion for the other, but now she was united to her by the bond of desolation. She took to performing little womanly services for her, mending her gloves

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for her, bringing her flowers, calling for her when they were to go out together. She was, on the surface, another creature altogether, eager and tremulous, with a kind of pathetic dependence about her. She waited on the other's movements and listened to what she had to say as though it were some gospel of cheer. But Brain, lost in a maze of thought, spoke very seldom and then usually on abstruse subjects, such as the influence of the so-called inanimate, the fact that stones worn by the feet of history give out distinct impressions. And this, when what Beulah longed for was the companionship of a heart, warm, human, to thaw the cold impassivity that had settled over her!

Richard, poor fellow, was exiled. A hundred times, in a state of desperation, Beulah was on the point of sending for him; Brain saved her. Brain caused all resentment towards Howard to give place to a fierce respect for the step he had taken. Yielding to an unutterable desire for his presence, she would have asked him to come to her, but the fear that he had ceased to care for her kept her inert, and she would sit with her hands locked tightly together while the tears ran steadily down her face. Brain, in her aloofness, helped her to understand the loneliness of the man's life. For the first time since her marriage she began to realize the superficial nature of the sympathy she had given him.

The feeling grew into one of haunting self-reproach, and mingling with it came a sudden horror of the *quartier*, a depressed sense of its wickedness,

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and a realization of the influence, however slight, that it casts over people, even people like Richard and herself. Beulah, who had never had her eyes open before to anything but her art, looking into Brain's ascetic little face, though what she found there to substantiate her conclusion is a mystery, grew very definite on this point; so definite, that she rejoiced that Jules was away from it all, even for a short time.

And Beulah's companionship for Brain may be likened to a ray of light and warmth struggling through a crevice into a room long closed.

On a cold wet morning in March the two women were breakfasting in a little creamery in the Rue de la Grande Chaumière. They ate their crescents and drank their *café au lait* in a silence which Beulah, being more than usually wretched, could not break. She had grown thinner and the expression of her eyes was such that people sometimes turned to look after her. She had become as indifferent to physical discomfort as her companion. Suddenly, Brain roused herself and, tilting back her head in a way she had, looked at Beulah through her glasses. This was an announcement that she had come down, for the moment, to things of every day life.

"Miss Rahfield has been asked by the Salon committee to exhibit the piece of work purchased by that German count," she announced abruptly. "It is an honour, I gathered."

At this time the mere mention of Enid's name often

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cost Beulah an effort at self-control. Now if Brain had thrown a bomb, she could not have been more surprised. After an instant she leaned forward over the table, but in spite of her efforts, her voice shook.

Why, yes, certainly, it was a great honour. When had Miss Rahfield told her?

Brain was hazy. A day — a week ago Enid had stopped her as she was crossing the garden. But already her interest had flagged. She got out her little worn porte-monnaie, paid for her *petit déjeuner* and went away in her usual preoccupied state before Beulah had fairly recovered from the effect of the news.

In spite of everything her first emotion was one of overwhelming pride, though at the same time her eyes were bright with the first touch of jealousy she had ever felt towards Enid. Then she was consumed with bitterness. She recalled Enid's scathing arguments against Salon exhibiting. This was plainly an attempt to ignore still further the one who had aided her, even while at the same time she triumphed over her, for she did not doubt that Brain had been chosen as a means for passing on the news.

And then suddenly she decided that Paris was impossible. It had got on her nerves — and she had never known before that she had nerves! She would leave for the country, waiting only for "The Cup" to be placed. As for the opening of the Salon, what was one Salon more or less? What she longed for was the country, and the gentle companionship of trees all

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decked out with new leaves, and young frolicsome lambs, and green fields and tender skies; or perhaps a fishing-town with the offing filled with ships; would be best of all, these were but another kind of flock, of which the fisher-folk, with their honest faces, were the shepherds. And then there was always the great, illimitable, gleaming expanse of the sea answering to every mood. Strange she had not thought of it before; she would lose her loneliness by the sea. She would go to Boulogne-sur-Mer.

During the days that followed this eagerness grew upon her. She longed for the sea, as a little child longs in time of trouble for its mother. From which it will be seen that Beulah, the well-poised, the perfectly-organized, was ill. A doctor would have pronounced her malady spring langour, if, indeed, he did not call it by a longer name and a more learned. What really ailed her, was a sick inclination to forgive, when there was no forgiveness in her, and a loneliness and a desire for love that were eating her great tender heart out.

As always happens in cases where haste is desirable, an infinite number of things delayed her. And what made everything harder was the fact that she met Enid almost daily. She was usually in the company of Durien, who was her instructor, and who was known to take a great interest in her. Ordinarily, she gave Beulah a little nod, though once or twice she added a casual remark, but this was obviously to divert the

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comment of Durien, who thought them still friends. She seemed to Beulah to be certain of triumph, to carry it like a sword beneath her garments. These, artistic and not too fashionable, suggested one who has arrived or is about to do so. She seemed even more nervously alive than usual, her eyes bright and restless, her nostrils quivering like those of a wild horse, and her sensitive, mobile lips moving in constant speech. Already the fever of success seemed to have risen high in her. She was burning with it. She was ill, far more seriously ill, than Beulah. Of this the older woman was aware. But the fact did not stir her. The old bond was destroyed. As for Enid, she was absorbed in but one thing, the coming Salon.

The days of broken weather continued; gusts of rain and freezing snow, which made the pavements slippery, strewn with buds wherever there were trees, and the aspect of everything desolate and cheerless, were followed by hours of sunlight which dried up the gutters, brought out the leaves in the public gardens, and put a flutter of hope into hearts chilled from winter.

Trying weather it was, especially for artists who at this season of the year have need of all their vitality.

It rained the day "The Cup" and "The Spring of Life" were transported to the Salon, for it so happened that they were moved on the same day. Separate deputations attended to the moving of each piece, and these seemed to fill the little garden. Enid's, being a cast of heroic proportions, was moved in pieces. Durien

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himself helped to carry out the soldier and the head of the angel, while two men, in white blouses, followed with arms and wings and finally the pedestal between them. Beulah's smaller marble group went complete. Great splashes of rain, driving under the covering, ran down the mother's face and fell into the cup which she is offering the child, and the child, out in the inclement light of the April sky, was more than ever like the little Louis at home, and the mother was Elizabeth.

Both girls shivered from the wet which they encountered thoughtlessly in their anxiety for their work. Enid accompanied each section of hers quite to the street, without thinking of an umbrella, save when reminded by Durien, and then she laughed and held up her little thin hands to protect her head. Beulah, only when the moving was accomplished, perceived her wet garments and decided listlessly that she would have to change them. Now that the excitement was over, it all seemed so little worth while to her. She was half tempted to go in, in the old way, and make Enid some coffee, to contribute to the comfort which the girl's state so sadly required. But in all the flurry, Enid had scarcely spoken to her.

And so each, in her own *atelier*, the floor of which was trampled with bits of plaster and clay, and the air permeated with dampness which had entered through the opened doors, prepared to go over to the Salon and superintend the placing of her work; a thing, which in the past, they would have done so joyously in company,

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but which, owing to their changed relations, had become a nervous ordeal for each.

Suddenly the rain was scattered by brilliant rays of sunshine, and the streets of the *quartier* seemed alive with a plaster, bronze, and marble population, all wending its way on the shoulders of men, in push carts, and on drays, towards the Salon. The eyes of busts, that had hitherto known only the four walls of an *atelier*, encountered all the varied life of the streets with a superb indifference. It was as if they felt themselves the thing of supreme importance, and the arms and legs of the men beneath them, but the staggering of slaves. Their hour had arrived. The coming contest was to them the breath of life. So each piece of work, certain to the last particle of bronze or marble or paint that composed it, went forward to the arena. It was a pageant of labour, a procession of results, a display so earnest as to set the work a-quiver with actual life and place it, for the time, above those who had created it.

In this wise, figures with upraised arms, challenging high heaven, figures that drooped in every limb, dancing figures, figures locked in mortal combat, the bold, the grave, the gay, were borne forward, and always, whatever the expression fixed by the material, the subtle meaning was the same — expected triumph. Why else were they going to that arena of all the art world?

The canvases, greater in number and of a more varied interest, formed another contingent. These,

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hinting little of the attics in which they had been painted, the tiny *loges* beneath the eaves, the obscure corners where light was the one requisite, breathed, instead, of spring, of winter, of all seasons and all climes. Leaves seemed to rustle in some, bells to toll in others, waves to leap, snow to pile mountain high. It was all the phenomena of nature reflected on canvas, it was a miniature world, borne forward by the eager agency of the human will that had created it. And ever the sun smiled benigantly on all this harvest, this contest about to begin. And if there was any scepticism, it lurked in the smile of gargoyles, stretching out their necks from below ancient eaves. These might have been the ghostly faces of artists turned to stone by repeated failures, for the madness of the race seemed to them, alone, a spectacle for cynical mirth, mirth which made them hold their sides and strain their necks and, with gaping jaws, in pantomime shriek their derisive cheers, as the contestants swept below them.

CHAPTER II

THE VOICES

THE Salon resounded with hammering, scraping, the squeaking of laden trucks, and with voices raised in excited discussions and intermittently subdued, but, despite the confusion, Beulah knew at once, on entering, that Enid had already arrived. She felt the girl's presence, though it was some minutes and "The Cup" was fairly placed, before she looked around for her. Then she saw her, the centre of an animated group, the German Consul, who bowed gaily, Durien and others. They were all looking at the "Spring of Life." Occupying an important place at one end of the glass-domed garden, it seemed even more daring and original than in the studio. The Death Angel, no angel at all according to the conventional standard, supports a falling soldier with one arm, while with the other she lifts to his lips a draught from the little flowing spring at her feet. The laxness of the soldier's limbs, the manner in which they sprawl abroad, all the life gone out of them, the heaviness of his head against her shoulder, all the listless awkwardness and droop of him, contrasted with her abounding vitality, produce a profound impres-

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sion. For the Death Angel, mysterious and buoyant, is gay even to laughter. Her eyes meet the observer with a deep inexplicable mirth, and like the eyes of some pictures, they follow him wherever he goes. It is vitality triumphant, it is life not death, with her strange weird message for all.

"It holds its place well, doesn't it?" cried Durien across to Beulah. She nodded, but still Enid paid no heed. With eyes unnaturally bright and cheeks flushed she carried on an animated conversation with a group of officials, but all the time she kept her hands locked in front of her as rigidly as a child does when striving to control its excitement. Her gaiety was a mask, and the group was a proof, suddenly terrifying to Beulah, of the soul that over-informed so weak a physical organization. Enid should have been a man, a giant, with the constitution of a centenarian, to have supported it, for, hampered by her fragile femininity, the spirit of her ambition fretted in her prehensile hands and in all the vivacious movements of her little frame, like a wild thing behind bars. When it showed itself for a moment in her eyes, the effect was at once fascinating and heart-rending. Now the proof of it, rising before the world in a work of such scope and commanding genius that the masters of the art themselves need not have been ashamed of it, — struck more than one heart with sudden fear.

"I have told Miss Rahfield this is no place for her," Durien said later, coming across to Beulah, and not-

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withstanding everything, the older woman experienced a dull, — almost a reminiscent pang of anxiety. It was as if she could not become accustomed to the change in her own feeling. She longed to send Enid home. The girl's excitement was so apparent to her that for the time she heard neither Durien's compliments nor the compliments of any of the others that flocked around her. But gradually she knew that they were praising "The Cup," and that revived and reanimated her. Her face began to glow.

"The Cup" as a piece of work she had known from the first to be worthy, but it was not as a piece of work that it made its chief appeal to her to-day.

The mother is seated and astride of her knee is a boy, twisted about in one of those uneasy, temporary postures so common to children, which are but an expression of exuberance. With one little hand he grasps the cup which she holds and presses his lips hungrily to the brim, while the other hand is reached up and laid against her cheek. The involuntary reverence of the caress, nestling, light as the touch of an angel, contrasted with her face, is the chief charm of the group. For in that face is a prescience of all that life — the life that she gave him — may hold for him. Sorrow is there as well as joy, and patient tears lurk behind the smile. Here, you feel, in those graciously moulded, infinitely tender features is the real cup; the cup of life from which we all must drink, willy-nilly, until, presto, death comes to present another.

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"I suppose, to the public mind, your idea and Miss Rahfield's may seem to supplement each other," remarked Durien. "This figure, it will say, is the presence that introduces us into this existence, while Miss Rahfield's introduces us into the next." He laughed, but Beulah flushed. Had she not been attacked by Enid on the score of a possible likeness between the groups. "Miss Rahfield's group may be the more spirited," he went on to say, "but you," he added in a lower tone, "have caught that look, which irrespective of race or type, characterizes maternity. Your figure might stand for universal motherhood."

And this, indeed, was its deepest beauty, calling back into the divine regions of childhood all who looked at it. To Beulah, more than ever on this day, it was Elizabeth and little Louis that spoke to her from the marble, it was love, home.

And yet it was only a marble mother and brother she had to comfort her, and a friend, a part of that dear past life, grown colder even than the stone.

She was alone.

Years later she was to recall this moment of absolute desolation which preceded her departure from the Salon. Could she have turned back! and yet if she had, perhaps it would have made not one jot of difference.

Two hours later she was seated in a railway carriage *en route* for Boulogne. She had made her last hurried preparations, and, after some hesitation, had sent a line

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to her husband, explaining that she felt the need of a little change, and wistfully giving him her address; then a note to Richard saying that she was going away, though in this note she took pains not to say where or for what length of time. At last, with some feeling, she had said good-by to the little preoccupied Brain, and had come away. She was free now to think if she must, or to rest if that were possible. And to her surprise she found that it was possible.

A twilight filled with grayness and spring scents was settling down over the earth. As they left the city and whirled through the open country, she noticed with a delighted sense of novelty that the lilac hedges were in blossom and the season well advanced. The little garden plots were green, and peasants were gathering vegetables for the early start next day to market. When the train whizzed by, they unbent and waved cap or apron or kerchief. Through the doors of open barns, men and maids looked up from the milking, and even the placid cows turned their heads. All gave the passengers Hail and God-speed! In one of the villages at which they halted, a battalion of soldiers was drilling. Against a background of shop fronts, they made a picturesque mass, their red trousers twinkling in time to the shrill music of a fife, their honest stupid faces set straight ahead, but with eyes, none the less, interestedly aware of the train. Finally, while the engine still puffed in the station, they were marched away up a hilly street with a dog barking at their heels. But

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even then, their little coat-tails seemed to wave the same message of cheer to the travellers.

As they left the fortifications of this town, they passed the remnants of a *fête*. Confetti, like coloured snow, was heaped up by the roadsides, a flag or two still waved from a lamp post, a merry-go-round was in full swing. But all the caravans had disappeared, save one. This, drawn by weary horses and followed by a clown in tattered motley, loomed up against the pure sky. And the last object clearly visible was the fellow, waving his arms in salutation to the train, to the departing day, perhaps, and, who shall say not? to peace and to rest and to evening.

And ever the dusk deepened and with the approach of the night came the salt, fresh scent of the sea. This completed the reviving process. Beulah lifted her head, from where it had sunk against the cushions, leaned forward, and tried to catch the sound of it as she had caught the scent. Finally, it came to her: a rush, a dull roar, and above it, like the crest on a wave, a soft crooning, the great mother-song of the sea. She had reached her refuge.

But in the city left behind the great race never ceased. On its pavements all classes of people jostled each other. Each face bore the same indelible stamp; on some so lightly traced as to be scarcely discernible, on others limned boldly. It was visible in the eyes of men, opulent, well-fed but excited, who had dealings on the Bourse, and also in the eyes of lean creatures, portfolios

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under arm, who had nothing in view but a higher clerkship, and who were consumed with the fear that another would get it; it was revealed in the stooping shoulders of working-girls, the *blanchisseuse*, the *couturière* with her bundle, even in the swaying gait of models and women of the half-world, displaying their grace of face and form as openly as a huckster his wares; the fact was the same. It was written in the faces of little children fighting for a piece of bread in the gutter; in the attitudes of beggars who formed living, cringing, grasping balustrades at the church doors. Everywhere it was the same, each creature measured against some other, and the strongest, only, surviving : — struggle, the law of the universe; a law so deep-reaching that it seemed to govern the earth and give rise upon its surface to numberless arenas, the chief of which now was the Salon.

How deceitful the deserted air of the great structure; for within those quiet walls was that which illustrated the very heart, the life-principle, as it were, of the struggle. Trembling, eager, peering this way and that, Enid stole forth from the nook where she had been for the last hour in hiding. Was that an official making the rounds, a workman, or a lingering artist? No, merely a shadow. Reassured, she stole forward again. She approached her work and with earnest eyes, her lips dropping apart, studied it minutely. Then with a glance darted this way and that, elaborate precautions for silence, she stole over to Beulah's less pretentious group. She looked, and suddenly a great

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sigh shook her. That was all. Despite her feeling, she dwelt upon it as carefully as her own. However, there was certainly a little lack of facility in the modelling. As for her own angel, it suddenly seemed to her anxious eyes that the hands were large.

Thus she ran fleetly between the two, comparing and weighing the beauties and imperfections of each piece of work, as she imagined the public would do on the morrow. At first she did this calmly, with clear perception of the qualities of each, but gradually the spirit of "The Spring of Life" that reflected so much of her own wild nature, took possession of her. Intoxicated with excitement and fatigue, she paused before it where it rose, dominating by its proportions the surrounding work. Fever merged one sense into another. Dwelling on each excellence of the group, she seemed to hear the comment of those who would stand before it on the next day. Suddenly, her spirit free for the time from the trammels of the body, she wheeled about. The other marble and bronze creations around her represented the sculptors who executed them. She heard a buzzing and murmuring of comment. Involuntarily, she spoke for them, she lent them tongue.

"It is a masterpiece!"

These magic words, vitalized by the very breath of the spirit of work, launched into that assemblage of dusky forms, still fresh from the chisel and the foundry, seemingly produced a strange phenomenon. Each according to the measure of inspiration that had gone

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to its making, thrilled to that voicing of the old inflaming desire. They waved their arms, they lifted their faces, they moved, they turned, calling attention to their own perfections; but, standing at the base of her group, — her body unspeakably fragile, pitifully feminine, become utterly subordinate to the light that burned in her eyes — she silenced their claims by the vehemence of hers.

“Speak for yourselves to-morrow, if you will,” she cried, “but tell me now, frankly, what do you think of this? You,” turning to a bust by Rodin, “Monsieur, you great sculptor, what do you say? You say it is good, excellent, do you not? And you? And you? Ah, I hear you over there, Charpentier, and Peuch — and all you lesser ones!” and she laughed in wild exhilaration, the fever which had been eating her up for days, mounting still higher, reaching a delirium, still further loosening the bonds of the body, “Ah, I listen to you all, all! You make me happy. And I have feared so much (there was a touch of the little child here), but I am repaid for all. Shout it louder — louder — a masterpiece — a masterpiece — the only masterpiece in the world by a woman! Ah,” turning with a gesture of supreme triumph, “hear you that ‘only,’ Beulah? You are silenced by that fine ‘only’ which brings me such restfulness that I can go home and — sleep.”

At that word, the phantom commotion died down. Silence and shadows took possession of the place. And the claims of Enid Rahfield’s weakened body, a

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persistent troop, reasserted themselves. There was fatigue and fever and something that was neither, a lethargy that left her just sufficient strength to move. With dismayed shrinking, as if the strangeness of her action for the first time struck her, she crept forth.

That night fever raced through all her frame, parching, consuming, all but destroying it, but for the spirit there was infinite joy. The long race was over. Out of the struggle, out of the dust and the shame of it, she had emerged. In her delirium she had touched that goal which has been the dream of generations in the past, as it will be for those yet to come: perfection attained, triumph absolute.

CHAPTER III

DISILLUSION AND RESOLVE

THE next day, costumed in one of those graceful, strikingly individual garments which she had lately affected, Enid was at the Salon. She paused for some time on the landing of the staircase which overlooks the glass-domed garden where the sculpture is exhibited. Viewed from this point, the scene suggests to the fancy an undulating fabric of dark heads and shoulders, punctured in innumerable places by the gleaming white of the marbles and the tops of palms. From this immense swaying drapery seemed to be shaken forth an incense at once acrid and exhilarating, the incense of criticism. Suddenly Enid's nostrils quivered and she passed down the steps and mingled with the surging throng.

A lace collar, a spreading threadwork of delicate vines and great round blossoms, concealed what had developed into a slight deformity of the shoulders, and in her hand she carried negligently a large dark rose, which brought into relief the almost childish smallness of her figure. She was extraordinarily pale. Her eyes, edged with their heavy lashes, were like liquid

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agates, their expression enigmatic; but every instant she smiled, disseminating a sort of youthful radiance. She seemed, indeed, like the very spirit of youth invested, however, with a kind of mystery. When she caught sight of Richard, her lids drooped and she faltered for an instant in the conversation she had begun with a pupil from Julien's.

As she moved through the crowd, she twirled her red flower, nervous and vivacious.

Her one object in coming to-day was to convince herself of the prevailing opinion in regard to her own work and Beulah's. Quite at the end of the vast place she could descry the imposing silhouette of the "Spring of Life" and not far away rose Beulah's mother and child. Slowly she drew near the two groups and while apparently examining other pieces of work, she listened attentively.

But the result was confusing. It was a tangled skein of praise and criticism which wound itself around each and every piece of work in the Salon. And from this skein she tried to disentangle the chance threads that touched Beulah's group and her own.

She stood near a party who were studying her fountain — gray-haired academicians, decorated with red rosettes, — and heard them deplore the tendency of modern art to express an idea. "Idiocy!" cried one of them, a small round man with an enormous forehead and weak eyes which he constantly wiped with a large handkerchief that he flourished like a flag, "Art should

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not tell us stories!" But he found the modelling of the group admirable. She overheard Beulah's figure compared to "old *Michael's* Madonna, don't you know?" — though the handling of the drapery was criticised. Why had the artist not left it more in the rough?

At the end of the first day she could make little of the result. She returned home in a state of exhaustion so tense that when she closed her eyes, great masses of people seemed to be passing beneath the lids. She saw the black of the men's coats, heard the rustle of the women's silks, was half-nauseated by worn-out perfumes. But she was none the less confident that the bulk of praise, so far as Beulah's work and her own were concerned, was with "The Spring of Life." In spirit it was essentially French, and already had she not seen how it attracted the crowd? The look in the angel's eyes was enough to account for this. Ah, it could not fail to please! Then, as one is affected in waking moments by the atmosphere that clings round a powerful dream, she still believed tenaciously in the "voices," those alluring utterances of her own intense desires; the more so, as the fever in her veins increased rather than diminished. That night she dreamed once more of a world of triumph, but with the first hint of dawn came a recurrence of the old torturing doubts. She turned restlessly on her couch, conscious of deadly langour.

"Is Beulah the world to me?" she asked herself scornfully. "Bah, one would think so! Rodin, Fal-

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guière, what do I care for their success? But one must measure with some one near one's own size, and if my work does not excel Beulah's in point of execution and composition, at least in these things, there is nothing extraordinary about it. Well, we shall see." And she kept her eyes fixed on the square of the casement through which a wan light crept. A spray of the lilac-bush seemed full of a matinal gaiety. It bobbed about blithely and the breath of the morning came in filled with an unwonted innocence. But it had no power to quiet the feverish watcher. When the *concierge's* daughter, sleepy-eyed, appeared in the garden with her pail, Enid summoned her. She dispatched her for all the newspapers, that morning's harvest as well as the late issues of the evening before, and when they were brought and the great sheaf deposited on the coverlet, she lay back among the pillows, pale and nerveless, without strength to examine them.

At length she lifted the first one and it shook in her fingers, wasted by disease, like a thing with life. And indeed it did seem to possess life, enough to flush that pale forehead with colour, enough to inundate the whole fainting frame of the girl with strength. How the letters of the print ran together under her eyes and became colour of sunshine, blue and yellow and gold, how the odour of the fresh ink was more than perfume in her nostrils. She devoured, drank, inhaled the printed words, turning eagerly from one paper to another, the *Temps*, the *Siècle*, the *Figaro*. But there

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was no dissenting voice. All that was said of her work was in praise of it, and there was so much more said than she had dared hope.

"A group of engaging distinction, expressing the frankness and exuberance of youth," wrote the critic on the *Temps*. "A group remarkable alike for the perfection of the modelling and the originality of idea, above all, for its unrestrained energy and animation," declared the *Siècle*. "The very glorification of youth and life," pronounced the *Figaro*, as if summing up the matter.

Enid repeated these phrases over and over. Suddenly, she gathered the mass of papers into her arms and crushed them against her breast. And slowly, one after the other, the tears ran over her cheeks.

Later, while she dressed, she went over more carefully all that the same critics said of "The Cup." For a comparatively inconspicuous group, it attracted more attention than she had thought possible. One sentence in the *Figaro* for an instant threatened to cloud her joy. "Equable, self-contained, pre-eminently sculptural is this little group, entitled 'The Cup,' by Mme. Marcel-Howard." She read the words over twice, and then cast them out of her mind. What had been said of Beulah's work amounted, in all, to but a few lines, while her own group had received in no case less than a paragraph of the most flattering character.

Yes, she was satisfied, more than satisfied. All

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through the years she had been drawing herself up for one supreme effort in which her skill should appear pitted against Beulah's. She had aimed to bring before the world such a daring and ambitious group that Beulah should be crushed utterly, put out like a smaller star by a greater. And now at last the hour of her triumph had sounded.

At eleven o'clock, smiling and reanimated, she was seated in a cab and rolling rapidly towards the Palais de l'Industrie. She appeared in the hall of Fine Arts where she was surrounded by a group of friends. Congratulations were showered upon her. Small, youthful, and for the moment, extremely modest, she extended her hand, laughing in gratitude. Oh, but the imperious joy beneath that exterior! And every now and then she cast covert glances at her group, as if to thank the angel for the fame she was winning.

During the first week of the Salon Beulah's quiet success troubled her scarcely at all, but gradually her mood changed. The "Spring of Life" was still praised for the brilliancy of the conception and the beauty of the modelling, but this, which had at first intoxicated her, now produced in her a fierce irritation. Could they grasp nothing of what she had meant? She, like Beulah, had striven to express a profound truth, therefore the constant repetition of such adjectives as "youthful" and "exuberant" applied to the group, kindled in her an anger which she could scarcely contain, the more so, as one or two men

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began to show the trend of a more serious criticism, which set, in a tide at first scarcely perceptible, towards Beulah's work. It was as if all the quiet, unobtrusive study Beulah had been doing in the past, had culminated in this sympathetic, reverent group of mother and child, which commanded a grave attention.

Alternately, Enid longed for the comfort of a humility, impossible to one of her nature, and turned on herself like a tiger. "Why do I care?" she demanded with her eyes flashing and her figure drawn up, "Is it not enough for me that *I* know the significance of the thing I have done? Do I require the opinion of others to convince me of its depth and truth? Bah!" This exclamation occurred constantly in the incessant, agonized conversations, which, independent of her will, were carried on in her own mind. She was conscious of what the doctors term "duality"; and from this fierce mental state there was no relief.

She dreaded with almost physical intensity to have Beulah's group approached from certain views, fearing that its beauty, so exaggerated to her, would be apparent to others. Sometimes she was seized with a nervous trembling, because of her powerlessness to keep observers away from it.

A crude reproduction of "The Cup" threw her into violent despair. She locked the door of her studio, and after examining the cut, sent the journal whirling across the floor. Then she commenced pacing back-

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ward and forward. Her brows were drawn sharply together and beneath them the eyes looked forth, tragic, defiant, piteous.

Suddenly she paused. "Have I asked so much of fate?" she demanded in a low voice, and with folded arms, the fingers beating a tattoo on the elbows, she seemed to wait an answer. "Have I asked for health? I don't know what it means. Have I asked for money? Have I even asked for love — yet I'm a woman! No, no, these blessings, every one of them, heaped upon Beulah, I've known nothing of. I've had of existence bare standing-room. And I've comforted myself with work. I thought it would recompense me for every privation. It has been food to me, drink to me. I've made it my life. And with what result? The honour I have justly won, is withheld and the palm given to Beulah. In keeping — Oh, perfectly!" She finished with a light laugh, but all at once, she covered her face with her hands and fell writhing on the floor.

Jealousy afflicted her like a disease, hopelessness in her was a malady. For the first time, Enid looked like poor Henry Rahfield. But she did not give up. After all, the reviews that had so far appeared were of a more or less ephemeral character. It was known, however, throughout the *quartier* that an article by Potin, a critic celebrated for his brutal impartiality and the keen justice of his criticism, was to appear in the *Revue des Beaux Arts*. This article Enid eagerly

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awaited. She staked her hope on it. It came out the closing day of the Salon.

As if the intensity of her fear had influenced the critic, the article closed with a comparative study of the work of the two most important women exhibitors of sculpture. As Enid read, she smiled, and the smile was a contortion.

"Much has been written concerning the almost startling animation of Mlle. Rahfield's group 'The Spring of Life.' It has been described, quite aptly, as the glorification of youth, and certainly a wild, almost hilarious mirth is expressed in it. But is it the joy of death that it portrays, or the boastful, ignorant joy of mortal life?

"Mlle. Rahfield's Death Angel fairly swaggers with insolence. Lithe and supple, she supports a dying soldier and urges to his inanimate lips, not the cup of which Omar sings, but apparently a cup of her own mirth, while she laughs out at the observer with a laugh that is meant to convince him of the huge joke of it all.

"By its verve and unrestrained gaiety, the group appeals to a certain spirit in Paris. It outdistances the French along their own lines. But even this nation of the light-hearted have never reached the point of making game of death. That remained for this young American, in whom, it would seem, an appreciation of the flowers of life, its juice and perfume, has dwarfed the apprehension of the deeper and more tragic truths.

"After being declined in Cleveland, Ohio, by a body

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of commissioners, the group has come here to bid for favour, and while the remarkable cleverness of the composition is not open to question, and the technique is marvellous, the idea is too *obviously* daring, the expression of the Angel's face *too* hilarious. It is a rocket-like attempt, touched off and meant to carry because of its novelty. The group stands in the Salon, a monument of hysterical imagination, brilliant in style and of remarkable vivacity, but a monument false in sentiment and jarring at once on the artistic sense, and what may be termed, the essentially ethical. Indeed, can we not say of it that it is a colossal mistake?

"A far more modest group," the critic went on, "is the one of a mother and child by Mme. Marcel-Howard. The group has the beauty of natural movement and the charm of living lines. It is of monumental dignity, and is illumined, so to speak, with womanly feeling united with a feeling for true sculpture.

"Who but a woman would have thought to give just that pose to the mother's head? — the feeling of holding the face quiet under the possible rough handling of a little fist? The touch of the infant, in this case, is light and delicate, the soul of love is in the tips of the wee fingers, but there is expectation in the mother's face of a rougher caress from the tiny hand. What patience, what infinite tenderness this waiting betrays! Despite its modest proportions, it is a work of great impressiveness, elevated, tender, deep, and true, and one is pleased to note in it a reflection of the spirit of

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the old masters. It well deserves the medal awarded it."

When she had finished reading the article, Enid laid it mechanically on the table. She felt a peculiar lightness that was a relief. Then her heart began to beat heavily and she seemed to herself enveloped in flame. She put her hands to her throat where there was a ball of fire.

"Portrays the 'joy of mortal life,' rather than the 'joy of death!' Imbeciles! The 'joy of death' — what did they know of it? But she could guess — she knew — she —"

Suddenly the article no longer filled her with despair, but begot in her a kind of ecstasy.

"Ah, but they shall acknowledge it," she muttered through her teeth. And this idea became an obsession as the days lengthened and the terrifying heat and loneliness of the city in summer increased.

CHAPTER III

THE MARVELLOUS HAND

THE veil on Beulah's sailor hat flapped like a sail, and her progress was impeded by fluttering skirts and hair which the wind had deftly loosened. But it was a kindly breeze, withal, for it had struck a bright colour up into her cheeks and a new light into her eyes. It seemed to have given her of its own robust and heartening spirit.

A fine brave creature she seemed, strong to endure and with healthy affections. The thought of Enid she steadfastly put out of her mind, but the love of a child for father, mother, and brothers survived in her in all its unquestioning simplicity. She never analyzed, she merely loved them, and this in a mature creature is such a gracious thing. The gentleness which dawned in Elizabeth's eyes when looking at Gaston, now touched the daughter's face and deepened there every day. Altogether, clambering over the cliffs she was as kindly and vital as the sea itself at its tenderest moments, and it was from the sea, at the sunset hour, that she gained her inspiration.

The world of fashion had penetrated even to Boulogne.

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But it was not to the beach, thronged with parasols, striped tents, and bathing-machines, that Beulah went most often. She frequented the cliffs and those stretches of beach, far below, where the fish-wives glean a daily harvest. Such was her eagerness not to miss one of the changing effects, that she often arrived breathless at her point of vantage, a flat rock sheltered by a towering cliff. Here, ensconced as in the box of a tremendous theatre, she enjoyed to the full the symphony of the twilight.

The feeling which agitated the waters seemed to be a mighty love; tenderness infinite seemed to mount into each wave and cling there visibly in flowers of gold and crimson. It was a garden of melody, of singing aquatic blossoms. The colours caught from the sinking sun ranged over every shade from the palest to the most brilliant; the chords sounded, contained every note ever breathed forth for peace and rest to a weary world. Or once more, the sea was a woman, a mighty mother. She approached the land with a murmur of love, stole fingers of foam among the cliffs and the crags, kissed the stern face of rocks, enfolded them in soft embraces, and leaped to put her liquid lips to the highest promontory. And everywhere she scattered her message of warmth and hope, brought straight from the west, where the great golden ball of God's sun is. Not a cliff nor a bluff but was touched by that glow, not a cavern unentered, not a crag forgotten. Rocks, lonely and austere, shouldering the sea even at ebb-tide, were

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transformed into beacons. Along the rigging of ships the colour crept like flame, illuminating their outline, so that they became like those barks of our dreams from some unknown port of peace — those ships of home. Together, the sun and the sea glorified that coast. Unfriendly and bleak, it was yet there that God lit his hearth-fires for the children of men. It was a home spot of the earth, where at low of the water, they appeared. Bare-legged, straight-backed, their petticoats turned up and pinned around their waists, sometimes their advent was at sunset, and on such days Beulah always waited for them. They completed for her the mystical meaning of the ocean's chant. Each carrying a basket, they scattered over the beach and commenced their search. At the approach of those brown feet and legs, crabs scrambled over the sands, green blots of terror, but, kicking like devils, they were transferred by strong imperturbable hands to the basket. Shrimps with transparent bodies slipped under stones, lobsters paddled and scrambled through the pools, but, go as fast as they would, they were pursued. Turtles were captured and overturned. The women were indefatigable. They laboured until their baskets were filled, then they unbent, and, carrying their living freight on their shoulders, they started for home. Beulah always followed them. Sold, these slimy, malevolent sea-creatures, became a storm-coat for the husband which he could wear of windy nights, a warm shawl for the grandam, wooden shoes for the boy, or perhaps even a

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trinket for the eldest daughter, or a cap, white and butterfly-winged, to enclose her round pink face. Comforts were there in those baskets of struggling freight, and even those little luxuries of the poor, which are the truest luxuries of all. Thus, the baskets were glorified, and as she followed the hurrying women, Beulah felt empty-shouldered and was conscious of a vague longing for their burden. Something of the domestic peace of the earth which surrounded them seemed to touch her, also.

As they neared the fishing-town, magical at this hour, the eagerness of the home-comer was communicated to her. Leaving the beach by a circuitous route over the least steep of the cliffs, they gained the main street of the little village where it reached down quite to the wharves. Here, some of the women habitually paused and gave signal to a ship riding peacefully at anchor. Others, however, hurried over the cobblestones, intent on supper-getting.

Past the church, so close to the jetty that it seemed in storms the waves must leap the belfry and sound their own signal of danger, by the low walls of the cemetery gray with leaning crosses and a storm-beaten Saviour in wood, through all the curious windings of the streets, they hastened, first one disappearing, then another into those low huts peculiar to a fishing-town. As the doors opened, Beulah had a glimpse of interiors, bare and rude except for the firelight and the waiting faces. It was then that she entered in imagination, and found

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Jules there, Gaston, Elizabeth, and little Louis, and more and more often it happened that she pictured John Howard at the head of the board.

The days followed one another, spring lapsed into summer, and Beulah began to think vaguely of her return to the city. At first it brought her a sense of discomfort. There seemed nothing but discord there, strife deadly and terrible. A quivering of the nerves was the universal disease that made love in any continuous sense impossible, affection but an intermittent thing. But gradually the impress of her surroundings had its effect.

The fisher-folk awoke in her a great tender humaneness. She watched them wistfully, especially the women. Outside of love for her family, her own life had contained but the one passion, the fine heroic thing, seldom seen between men, more seldom between women, absorbing love of a friend. And this, while it lasted, had seemed to check the full development of her emotional life in other directions.

The weeks stretched into months, but, influenced by her dread of the loneliness of the city without Enid's companionship, and without Jules, for the boy had been sent to Lucerne to execute a commission, she lingered in Boulogne until she felt that John Howard must have returned to Paris. To her surprise he had made no reply to the note she had sent him, giving him her address. In a passion of pain, she had brought herself to explain everything. She had written him

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scornfully, at first, a letter which it took her two days to compose. Then she had torn up the letter and written another, humble and all blotted with tears. But this also she had destroyed. She wrote and rewrote, sometimes carrying the rough draft of a letter with her for a week. But in the end, it too fluttered into the paper basket, that receptacle which is often like the human heart itself, bursting with scattered and defaced records, which God will piece together at the last. It was no longer pride that restrained her, but a species of fear. Had John Howard's been a cruder nature, she could have approached him. But she feared to offend the sensitiveness of a man whose very gentleness was the shield of an inner dignity. So with an effort, and finally with the noble submissiveness that develops in women under the stress of trouble, she held her peace. But she had corresponded with the Paris publishers and from them she learned that Howard expected to return to the city in August.

One day late in the summer she sat at a window overlooking the main street of the village.

The Assumption of the Holy Virgin, which cannot be observed with appropriate ceremonies in most towns because of the opposition of the Protestants, was being celebrated with great pomp. For here in old Boulogne by the sea, they are all Catholics, that is, all the weather-beaten fishermen, all the broad-chested, blue-eyed sailor boys, all the white-capped wives and bare-legged daughters, and so a most wonderful procession wound

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through the gray, fish-smelling streets, and the tourists had nothing to say about it, though not a few had left the beach to witness the scene.

The place where Beulah lodged was an inn, very humble but infinitely preferable to the large new hotels nearer the beach. It was little known, and, except for a small party of American artists, two or three with their wives, Beulah had the place to herself.

Ahead, before the procession started, stretched the drab street, reaching down to the very wharves where the masts of ships were visible, mingling with the purple of the sea and the atmosphere. And on either side of the street the shops were draped with nets which the good archbishop, who was coming from some distant place, was to bless as he passed. And there were sheets hanging from the windows, pinned all over with roses, while below the fisher-wives sat so close that their flaring caps, like fans, almost touched. They were arrayed in their best, a black dress, a satin kerchief folded over the bosom, satin aprons, and long ear-rings of gold nuggets, such as sailormen have brought home to their wives from time immemorial.

The faces of these women were wonderful. Their hair and their skin alike were of the rich red brown that one sees in the sails and the ropes, and in everything pertaining to a ship, and their eyes were as strong and as sad and as storm-enduring as the sea. Powerless as the sea to escape their part, they must, one generation following another, bear and suckle their children, even

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while they laboured unceasingly for the bread that sustained them. Like the sea their part was one of tremendous activity, relieved by periods of deep peace.

Such a time of peace was the present. As they sat with their brown hands folded expectantly, they all appeared curiously sobered and of advanced years, though few of them were probably more than fifty. The lack of blooming young faces among them was noticeable. But the cause for this was soon apparent.

After a rather tedious wait, there advanced up from the wharves at the foot of the street, unconscious heralds of the procession, three women carrying children. The sun struck through their round white bonnets, turning them to haloes. They were like a trinity of motherhood. They slipped back in the crowd and were lost in it as the actual procession came into sight and the chant broadened from a delicate chain, a silvery ringing of the word "Mary" to a volume. The wind, carrying off the less important syllables, produced odd elisions in the chant —

"Ave Maria!
Ave Maria!"

The house-fronts, the very sky and sea, gave back that name, until at last

"Ave Maria!
Ave maris stella!" —

they came into view. Ah, what agitation among the white bonnets of the curb. No doubt now where the

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daughters were! Every starched frill of those white bonnets bespoke motherly pride, and small wonder —

“Ave Maria!

Ave Maria!”

and that which seen from a distance had been one medley of blue and white, resolved itself into a band of marching maidens: each crowned with a stiffly flaring veil and wearing the Virgin's colours, they advanced carrying on a table between them a figure of the Virgin. Ah, what dignity in their approach!

“Just look at those girls,” cried a young painter, leaning over Beulah's chair, “all in white! How solemnly they carry that image. Look — look at that one with the banner. See, it is heavy for her. She rests it on the ground, it holds her dress back between her limbs. How noble she is!” And thus he ran on, voicing the enthusiasm of the party crowding the inn windows. And ever the pageant, sparkling with the light from the sea and the sky, swept below.

“Ave Maria!

Ave maris stella!”

After the maidens came nuns all in black and one could guess at the sweetness they had put away from them for this cause and that, had missed altogether. They followed like shadows after the white figures. And immediately in their steps came a host of little children, carrying uncertainly an image of the Infant Jesus, and a little St. John, curly-headed, bearing a

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cross. Just as they drew opposite the inn, he paused to take a cake out of his robe, to the delight of the group of artists. "The little rascal!" they cried.

"Ave Maria!
Ave maris stella!"

More chanting maidens, orphans this time, all in gray dresses and caps, footing it soberly. Then a band of priests in rich robes, whose deep bass trolled forth after the high treble of the orphans, was like a gigantic billow of sound following on a little wavelet.

"Ave Maria!
Ave maris stella!
Funda nos in pace!"

Their lungs were so strong, that their voices filled the street and struck against the house-fronts with a clapping sound. Being heavy men all, they kept the step with ponderous majesty, rendered ludicrous by the acolytes who followed close at their heels.

"The little red devils, they are only waiting until they can get home to punch one another," explained one of the artists. And at that moment a dog ran among the little band and one of the boys gave it a sly kick, and the party at the inn window went off into a gale.

"Oh, boys, boys!" cried the same speaker, "can any one fathom the amount of mischief brewing in their heads? See how indifferent they are, in contrast to the girls. Oh, the girls, they may drive us crazy, but they

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are the sweetest, noblest thing in all creation!" And so on and on. They were like boys, those artists.

And when at last a ship, all tight and trig, gleaming white and silver, came into view, borne on the strong shoulders of a dozen sailor lads, their voices united with those of the people in the street.

"Ave Maria!
Ave maris stella!
Ave Maria! — Ma-ri-a!"

The chant lapped her sides in waves.

Ordinarily suspended from a beam in the church, quiet, dusty, — to-day, all sails set, pennants kissing the breeze, she sailed over that sea of reverential sound. Ah, well might she be proud, that ship, on this her yearly voyage through the streets of old Boulogne, for her cargo, that which lay within her, brown and crudely-shaped, her cargo was the "Marvellous Hand" of the wooden virgin, which had been swept to that shore in a wreck, and which had since belonged to the town and blessed it.

With the passing of the ship, came another shout, for the great archbishop had come into sight with his assistant dignitary. The close of the procession was thus as unconsciously dramatic as its commencement. Women darted into the street, and the archbishop, in his embroidered robes, blessed them.

His assistant wore gloves and had a guard to protect him from the crowd, but the great archbishop touched

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all who came with his bare hand, the lame and the halt and the blind, and the little blue-eyed babies that were held up to him. And he smiled, and his smile was as sweet as the sunlight on the whispering sea, or the mysterious purple glow over the harbour. His smile was the benediction that made it all perfect. There might have been superstition and ignorance demonstrated in the parade, but the smile of that benevolent face was sufficient to blot it all out.

When the others turned away, Beulah remained at the window. Her resolve was taken. The next day, the very next, she would go to her husband. She would return to Paris and go to their apartment. And so eager was she for this meeting in which she would reveal the depth of her contrition and of her love, that she wept for joy. For the woman in her, that which until now had slept, was full awake.

The "Marvellous Hand" had touched her.

CHAPTER V

THE TALE OF THE SHOES

EARLY the next day, for she had taken the first train from Boulogne, Beulah stood among the bustling Paris crowds. Before she left the station, she bought a great bunch of roses, spending some minutes in selecting them. She smiled slightly. She seemed to expect happiness, rather than actually to possess it. There was about her almost the shyness of a girl. She had put on a dress which Howard preferred, a simple blue and white checked silk, and beneath her sunburned face the wide ribbons of her hat clung softly together.

Paris was sultry. Of late one terrific thunder-storm after another had burst over the city, and there would be more before night, though at present the sun shone fiercely. It was terrifying, ominous weather, and as the cab rapidly approached the familiar neighbourhood of the Clairemont, Beulah was convinced that she would not find Howard there. By the time she had descended at the door, her feeling of joy had given place to one of vague apprehension.

A forewarning of unhappiness reached her through the key-hole as it were, for, to the sensitively organized,

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sorrow and joy make themselves evident through an effluence as tangible as an odour. Beulah paled, but the next moment she flushed to the forehead. Some cigar ashes were scattered over the mantle and the faint scent of tobacco still clung to the curtains. Beneath the table, fallen and forgotten, lay an illustrated "Egypt" and some charred papers crammed the grate.

These slight mementoes seemed to inhabit the room with her husband's presence. He sat there lost in thought, in his fingers some blue god or other, from which he looked up at her with a brightening smile. But the illusion lasted only an instant, and she went swiftly across to the chamber. The first object that caught her attention was a copy of the *Revue des Beaux Arts* on the table. It was directed to her in her husband's hand. In it was the article concerning herself and Enid. She read it, at first mechanically, then again more carefully, but beyond a vague sense of gratification, it did not impress her. The comparison it contained was hateful. Her lips drooped and she began restlessly to remove her gloves. As she flung them down she perceived a letter almost hidden by the table cover. She seized it, and with that subtle prescience of misfortune, began to tremble.

It was the first word she had had from Howard since the day when he had gone away with she knew not what misconception in his mind. It had been lying here for three months, awaiting her return.

In his opening sentence, Howard explained that he

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directed the letter to the apartment as he preferred that she should not receive it until her return from Boulogne, which he concluded, would be in the course of a week or ten days. He desired, above all things, that she should not place a morbid construction on what he had to say. Then he alluded to the disparity between their ages, to the need they both felt constantly of devoting themselves more completely to their work, to the fact that, in their case, there was no child to complicate matters.

Beulah leaned against the table. She recalled the delicate reserve of the scholar, his horror of notoriety, his respect for conventions. Oh, how he must have suffered these three years! And she had never guessed, never dreamed!

His explanation of "desertion" as a point in French law, the amount he had settled upon her, his hope that she would have Jules to live with her, even the way he closed the letter, thanking her in touching terms for the loyal affection she had always given him, left no impression on her mind.

The terrible heat! But she shivered. A clock in the outer hall filled the turgid silence with its ticking. It ticked for a quarter, a half hour, then she turned. She was uncertain at first, but presently a purpose came to her. She must go to the studio. She whispered the fact that she must go, to steady herself.

The roses she left lying, just where they had fallen, but the letter she had enough presence of mind to take

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away with her. It would prove to her later whether or not she was dreaming.

In the street the intenser heat somewhat lessened her bewilderment.

She was so keenly conscious of it through that portion of her brain still active, that she grew fretful in her comparison of Paris with Boulogne at that hour. Ah, how refreshing were the breezes at Boulogne, and this air here was stifling. She lay back in the cab, her face, that had been so happy in expectation that morning, pale and moist. And this extreme bodily discomfort was the one thing that roused her from apathy.

Taking the mail which the young daughter of the *concierge* handed her, she made her way like one stunned through the garden. In the studio everything was covered with dust. She sank down on a chair, and then, because that seemed the next thing to do, began to inspect her letters.

Had Richard, poor boy, broken all bonds? With the exception of two business communications, they were all from him. Four notes, all written within the past week and all, doubtless, saying the one thing. It was enough to rouse any woman, even one crushed as she was! However, she took up the earliest in date and opened it mechanically. But after the first, her eyes fairly raced over the paper like a flame, and she could not open the envelopes fast enough, her fingers shook so.

With an evident attempt at calmness, the first told

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her that Enid had probably gone into the country, but as no one seemed to know where she was, and she had said nothing to anybody about leaving the city, he thought it best to make inquiries. He had written this, that in the event of Beulah's return, she might aid him in the search. "I wish you had thought fit to leave me your address," he concluded, "that I might be sure of your getting this, though I do not think there is anything to fear."

Fear, however, grew in every note. The next, dated a day later, said: "Have been to the *Pension*, Durien's, all the places she goes to most. I return here constantly. At last I have entered her studio and searched it for a clue. What worries me, is, that she has not been well for a long time, according to the report of little Brain who saw her last." And the third: "Still no trace. I hope for God's sake you will soon be back." And the last was a brief report, scribbled on a bit of paper — "No clue! Nothing! Have so far kept it quiet, though the *concierge* I believe suspects. To-day went to the Morgue."

Ah, the Morgue! He had been there. That proved nothing, and, following an intuition, she crossed the room, took down the key of the door of communication between the two studios and was about to unlock it, when she noticed a letter which had been pushed through from the other side and was almost covered by the rug. The superscription was in Enid's hand.

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"Dear Beulah" it opened abruptly:

"I find at this moment that I want very much to see you. I should like to take hold of your firm kind hands. I should like, before I go, to have everything straight between us. Still, when you read this, perhaps everything will be clear, things you have not understood before, and if I saw you again, I might become afraid. And I am not afraid now.

"I have thought it all out, Beulah. Life was not meant to be long for me. I've known this for some time, and so I've worked. And you know what that means, at least you know what it means to work in the normal way. But even you do not know what it means to reach ahead into years you will never have, into middle age, into old age even, and then put all this summoned force into one piece of work. This is what I have attempted to do, and with what result? Read Monsieur Potin's criticism. And he is not alone. There are many who think with him. They understand nothing -- nothing of what I have meant. I do not even speak their language! Very good, I will make myself clear.

"You will find me, I daresay, at the Morgue," the letter continued, "that is, you will if you return to Paris within a few days. But it doesn't matter whether you find me or not, for they will not show me, as I have explained in a letter that I am related to Jacob Rahfield, a certain diplomatic agent. He is really only a third cousin and is at present, according to the papers, in

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Hong Kong, but they will not show me out of deference to him. But inquire with this letter, if you get it in time, and you will find me.

"And now, dear Beulah, I wish I had not so much to regret. I have not been fair to you always. It is this which worries me most. Do you recall that little figure of 'Success?' It was I who destroyed it, because I couldn't bear to have you get ahead of me. And afterwards I tried to get you to let me pose for another figure, don't you remember? And there have been other things since. But after all, what does it matter? Nothing matters but the one thing that justifies all, dishonour, life, even death itself! And this, in my case, shall endure, even though I take this step to give it that star, that plume, that completeness of meaning it would otherwise lack. For who after this, can find the angel wanting in the 'joy of death!' I myself will declare the exultance of death — death which will procure for me that which life has denied. Oh Beulah, *my work! my work!*"

And with this word the letter, otherwise so calm, concluded. This word that wept and prayed and exulted; this word, that, blotted and scarcely decipherable, glowed with all the terrific, the pitifully disproportionate energies of a life now drawn to its close.

The wine, too vivid and too strong, had burst the goblet.

When Beulah emerged into the street she became keenly conscious again of the heat, which seemed to

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penetrate everywhere and to cling like moisture. Her mind being in that super-alert state which precedes the realization of grief, she was aware as never before of the fever of the city. The queer zigzag of its house-tops against a vaguely troubled sky, filled her with unnamable terror, even while the distinct charm of its chimney-pots and its pavements took hold on her.

The slim graceful steeple of La Sainte Chapelle seemed to quiver against the scudding clouds, a needle point of heat; the bridges spanning the river had an ominous look, seeming to hold the waters down, like spread fingers, over the frightened leap of the city's heart. The front of Nôtre Dame, seen from a distance, had the look of an apprehensive spirit, that seemed to shrug its two shoulders high — high, staring, wondering what the winds of heaven meant to do next: rid her of a few spired furbelows, leave her quite bare-headed, like a giant crone, mumbling of religion to an empty city from which the inhabitants had been swept like leaves before an autumn gale?

Despite everything and above everything, Beulah felt the restless, gay, strident, terrifying, childlike tide of its people. Porters from the Halles in their large white *sombreros* and blouses passed her, long-haired students, clerks, beggars, dirty boys in corduroy blouses and bare legs, girls carrying long sticks of bread in their aprons, little dressmakers with the black bags that hold their work, soldiers and *gendarmes*, priests with their long robes twisting about their hurrying ankles,

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fat-bellied friars: all that army of venders with push-carts and those with baskets: old witches with toy balloons straining at the end of a cord grotesquely, like bubbles of the terrible heat; mendicants of every description elbowing the more decent classes and the wealthy, all swept past her. And to this ever-increasing stream of pedestrians, were added those in conveyances: tram loads of people, all with a resolve more or less feverish: omnibuses swaying under their heavy loads, and the ceaselessly-rolling cabs, each the shell for the time, of a being, a human thing, pompous or depressed with his individual expenditure of energy for — what? Well might the question be asked.

Everywhere this energy of a consuming purpose betrayed itself. It was openly revealed in the burning glance, swift gait, and nervous gestures of thousands, while in other countless thousands, the attempt at concealment made it but the more apparent. It hid unsuccessfully behind countenances whose expression was one of studied indifference, and lurked deep down in the eye of pleasure. Pleasure, indeed, was its chief mask. It was as visible in music-halls and cafés as in the marts of business. Even when it slumbered for an instant, the indelible stamp of it remained, traced on the brows of the noble and the corrupt alike, — to beat down by fair means or foul, to gain a place, a name, or a following, oftenest of all, mere sustenance. The individual object might be bread or a throne, but the brand of the struggle was upon all.

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And this expenditure of energy, more often for a vicious object than a worthy, terrible as it was to contemplate, was less terrible than the sight of those in whom a controlling purpose of any sort was lacking. These, the naturally deficient, the weaklings and the defeated ones, slouched against the parapets of the bridges and squatted on the stones below. As Beulah followed the quays, she passed numbers of them, lurking there, as if to point the terrible activity that was elsewhere. Ah, how could it have grown even slightly vague in her memory, this meaning of Paris rendered all the more tangible by the heat!

She followed the quays with their steps leading down to the river, which, swollen and yellow from the recent rains, dashed heavily against the piers on which gleamed large iron rings, and, not satisfied with reflecting all the fever of the life along its banks, seemed consumed with an object of its own. How many passengers did the boats take on at the little landings? How many then could death take on at the river's hands? This was its purpose, and it fretted and lashed its invitation aloud in its insatiable desire to clasp another victim.

As Beulah drew near Nôtre Dame, its towers elongated. It seemed to be lifting its shoulders higher, this time in an endeavour to conceal something that lay to the rear of it, a long, low building, yellow as the face of death itself! And this Beulah, walking like one in a dream, entered.

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Here in a little office where nothing of the heat penetrated and where the drip, drip of water falling on hard surfaces formed an accompaniment to the conversation, her search came to an end.

The custodian produced a blotted letter from an oil-skin bag, a few pitiful articles, "but owing to the time," he said, "seven days, and the heat —"

Beulah interrupted him. Her eyes had fastened on something so instinct with her friend's personality, that she cried out, "Enid!" and stretched forth her hands.

A pair of shoes!

Defaced by the water, heavy with mud, they not only proclaimed their wearer indubitably, but, carrying even now in their stiffened creases the ruling motive of that life, they appeared to her as the symbol of all human energy. In them was the visible sign of that energy, that convulsed the city, brought to its climax. The start was there and the goal, and the long hard struggle that lay between. Ah, the dishonour, the slime on them; the sun, and the ecstasy!

The custodian called a cab for her, and she thanked him quietly and rolled away. But instead of the passing scene, she saw again her father's shop filled with twilight, and herself, a girl, standing at the door of it. Eagerly she watched the feet of the passers-by — some dragging, some limping, some hurrying, some even running; all intent on an object. Where were they all going? she had asked herself. Their object, what was

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it, especially the object of those whose feet went most swiftly, strongly?

But that question she answered now. Necessity spurred on many, but sometimes it was ambition, ambition that reached beyond the grave.

Oh, the tale of the shoes!

CHAPTER VI

THE BREATH OF THE RUNNERS

IN Enid's studio Beulah sat with a shawl about her. Now and then she passed her hands up and down her arms. Her face looked gray. The wrappings around Enid's work, left to dry and stiffen for a week, she had renewed, as if she expected her return. When Brain approached, Beulah looked up at her steadily.

"How could she do it?" she asked.

"Don't *ma chère*," whispered Brain. "Instead, listen to what I tell you. The incident is true," she pursued, and she took the other's hands with the timid gesture of one unaccustomed to receiving or offering a caress. "He was a consumptive, poor young man, and he was writing a book into which he had put the best of his thought, and all his soul. But death came for him one day while the book was still unfinished. You should have heard his laments. No word for any one, not even his mistress, and he came near dying in the wildest despair, when, suddenly, his clenched hands, still stained with ink, relaxed, the agony passed from his brow, his poor lips smiled. He had been told in a vision that he could finish the book hereafter. So he

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went tranquilly enough at the last, poor soul, quite like a gentle lamb that the shepherd leads to the fold. But his mistress, what was there for her? Poor, humble, uneducated, not only was she bereft of her lover, but the book, the dear book on which they had both staked their hopes, was never to be known in the world in which she was left alone. For her grief, there was no relief of any kind. But one day, she also, received mysterious consolation. The spirit of her lover spoke through her, directed her to take up the pen, and, all ignorant as she was, she was allowed to finish his book. It was the triumph of love."

During the recital Beulah never moved her eyes from Brain's face. A faint flush appeared on her cheek. Oh, if Enid would speak through her — allow her to finish the work she had left uncompleted, the fame she had dreamed of, should outshine that of any artist who had ever lived. The story, fanciful as it was, was adapted to her mood. It brought her the first gleam of comfort she had received.

Perceiving this, Brain, who had developed since the tragedy a surprising gentleness and present-mindedness, which were to her weird little personality like the unfurling of feminine wings, extended her arms and drew the other against her.

In Enid's studio where they sat, the vital atmosphere that surrounds work in progress seemed to linger still. The water dripped from the stands, the tools seemed just laid down, the ceilings and walls seemed to give

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forth snatches of song, impatient exclamations, all those half-articulate sounds by which the worker expresses his mood. Not cognizant as yet through dust and long, long neglect, that its owner would return, never, the room still lived. What was a vanishing echo, a spiritual emanation of that excited, exquisite, self-destroying energy, still quivered in the apartment and kept death, flat-footed, unechoing, unrealizable death, in abeyance.

For life is motion, and, pound our heads as we will where the arteries throb, we can never comprehend death and stoppage.

Enid was no more.

Beulah closed her eyes gratefully under Brain's soothing fingers and sank into a stupor wherein the fact that she had tried in vain to grasp, was banished for the time, and the old sweet order of things resumed its sway.

A little later when Richard came, he noticed the slightly rested look of her face, and his own haggard features brightened. The poor fellow showed that he had not slept for days.

"Shall I let her read it?" he whispered to Brain, and then he gave Beulah that morning's Paris edition of the *Herald*.

It is not the poet with his tender verse, nor the musician that most truly comforts the heart of grief, but he of a far humbler calling, writing perhaps on the top of a tram or in any corner of our bustling cities where

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standing-room is allowed him. When such a one, often young, staggering with fatigue, writes an unknown name, a date, a few tragic particulars, with that kindness of the heart which is more than inspiration, what he has accomplished is a finer thing than the achievement of any poet, musician or praying priest of them all, and among the angels where such things are recorded, it will be written of him, "He comforted."

At sight of the paper Beulah uttered a cry. It brought Brain and Richard to their knees. They knelt on either side of her. But presently looking from one wet face to the other she grasped the sympathy in the article which Richard with many pauses read aloud, and the tears which had been so long in coming began to roll over her cheeks.

The article opened with Enid's letter to her, by giving which for publication Richard had thought to silence the thousand conjectures that would otherwise arise. Beulah had uncomprehendingly consented to this, and though it now seemed to her desecration, the attitude of the paper rendered her humbly grateful. For Enid's motive was comprehended and a high tribute was paid to her unusual talent. Young, beautiful, she had given her life to piece out that of her work. Had she done so in vain? the writer inquired. No, he was inclined to believe that the *Ange de la Morte* by Mlle. Rahfield would endure. And the article concluded that the criticism which had appeared in a recent art publication was deeply to be deplored, since, acting on a

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super-sensitive organization, it had been the direct cause of the tragedy and had deprived America of one of her most promising artists.

And the afternoon journals contained articles of the same laudatory character. In this act of a young and charming woman, one gifted and beloved, there was that element of daring that ever stirs the blood. The stake for which she had played her grim game was, they declared, won. The group was praised in extravagant terms, and that fame so passionately desired and so dearly bought, rang through all Paris. It was as if they hoped by their persistent clamour of it, to reach her, so deaf now, so locked in silence, so unheeding.

Later, however, this note of universal regret and homage changed. Answering articles appeared in the more sensational journals, exception being taken to the fact that the motive for the tragedy was attributed to the article in the *Revue des Beaux Arts*. Was it not probable that the letter was written to cover, rather than to reveal, the real motive? Mere stray hints, rumours, but for Beulah the city teemed with the odour of defilement that seemed to rise from the news-stands.

The next day the services were held in what had now become one studio, for the partition between the two rooms had been removed. Commodious enough to accommodate all who came, filled with flowers, the place was a fit setting for the scene. By this act Beulah seemed to have gathered Enid to herself. Her love,

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indeed, seemed to envelope the other delicately, to shield her completely. And the work of the young artist added its silent and convincing argument. From a distant corner, some marbles beamed vaguely. These told of dignities unassailable. While a little unfinished group in wax, told of humaner traits, grace and the fine joy of living.

After the services the procession crossed Paris and went to *Père-Lachaise* along the boulevards. The heat had broken and when they left the studio a fine, sharp, cold rain was falling. It was as if Paris, in the midst of her numerous occupations and feverish haste, paused a moment, like a repentant child, at sight of what she had accomplished.

Durien was on the right at the head of the coffin, holding one of the scarves of the plumed hearse, and two artists of note, with whom Enid had studied, followed. The procession was a long one. The men walked the whole distance. Carriages conveyed the women.

The coffin was lowered into the grave and after a last prayer by the priest, Durien said a few words. While he was speaking the rain ceased falling and the sun just showed itself. All Paris lay before them in the distance, glorified in the fading light. Durien lifted his arm and pointed towards it, then to the grave at his feet.

"She has conquered," he said. "It was between her and the city yonder, and she was not one to wait, to join that army of waiters-for-recognition that throng

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the city. And recognition to her meant full and complete success, without a reservation. It was her due, now, at once. So she forced the issue, and she has conquered.

“To us who knew her best, this last impatient act of hers needs no defense. The thing was eating her heart out. It had become larger than herself. But in all such insanity, if such you can term it, there is a fine sanity. She took the step in order that the dramatic quality of the deed, the horror and ecstasy of it, should pass as living qualities into her work and make it endure. And her aim is accomplished. All the more completely accomplished, I believe, because the step was flagrantly, pitifully unnecessary, and the work must have taken its place in any case. But that which she has given it is that most valuable bequest to any piece of art, the perfume of a legend; in this case, an altogether tragic, heart-affecting legend which must become to it as a soul.

“A-quiver with intense femininity and intenser purpose, a creature of short life, but brilliant, she has died, as it were, into herself — the first flower of a species. But her aim, I repeat, is accomplished. The charm of her work must last, an ineffable thing, to inspire coming generations. For the ‘fated, distinguished, troubled, grand beat of her girl’s passion,’ is in it, a thing to make the world weep with its exquisite pathos, a thing to set the blood in a tide to the brow because of the majesty of the ambition it shows.

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“So let us lay her here in the freshened earth, beneath the sheltering wing of that angel of her own conception, that angel that tells us death is not death, but fuller, hopefuller life.”

As the speaker concluded, Richard felt the weight on his arm withdrawn. Beulah's face was transfigured.

He was by her side during the rapid drive back to Paris. He did what he could to make her comfortable. It worried him that she did not relax. For him, the strain had proved too long and continuous not to have a healthy readjustment now.

During these days of trouble he had scarcely had time to formulate a question which had, nevertheless, lurked constantly in the background of his mind. But now these thoughts would have way. Where was Howard? Why was he not with her? Knowing as he did, what her feeling had been for Enid, surely his place was by her side now. Was it possible that the little scene of which Enid had purposely made Howard a witness, an act so slight and so covered by subsequent events that it had almost slipped from his own mind, had none the less seriously influenced the husband? Sent him away, perhaps for good and all? At the thought of this possible distrust a flash of indignation swept over him. Men like that did not deserve such women! However, his heart began to beat more rapidly, producing a slight suffocation and he turned abruptly towards her.

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But her tense preoccupation was an unconscious rebuke, and he stared back at the flying landscape.

Enid had possessed too strong a charm for him, for his jealousy of her influence with Beulah in any way to affect it. Because of this, he had accepted her priority. But now, must not Beulah turn to some one? And if Howard —

Again he checked himself. But can a man help the thoughts that rush upon him headlong, that they are ill-timed, out of place? Besides, though apparently so possible, it was as impossible as it ever had been for him to make a step forward. He was ever to be held in check by steadfast and alien interests in the woman he loved, impossible for him to combat. Her very power of concentrated affection held him at bay. And yet was it not this very thing in her that he revered?

The dark tired face dropped into his hand and a more peaceful expression settled over it. Yet nature's loudest cry is difficult to silence in a young heart and at the first sentence Beulah uttered, the routed thoughts came back. They were in front of his studio now and he had left the carriage. Beulah turned to him, her pallor luminous in contrast with her black dress.

"Richard," she said, "I shall not see you again, for I am going away. Yes, it's best. The city is impossible. You've been a rock of comfort to me," she continued rapidly "and I shall never forget!" and for an instant she caught his hands strongly between hers and looked into his eyes.

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For a moment, half hypnotized, he returned this gaze, noting the tiny golden flecks on the gray irises — and the dolorous mouth. Then the meaning of her words found him and he grasped her veil. He held her by the flowing crape with both hands.

“But where are you going?” he cried.

She read his fear and smiled reassuringly. “Oh, I don’t know; anywhere, the place isn’t important, so that it’s the country,” she added wearily.

“But Beulah!” he protested, and then the tears welled into his eyes. She saw them and an answering tenderness betrayed itself in her. She bent towards him. “It is the only way,” she whispered in soft pleading. “I can’t stay here now. You must see that I can’t. If I did, — if I did,” she repeated, drawing a sharp breath and pausing slightly, “the meaning of the city would overcome me. To succeed, this desire leaps like a flame from one breast to another; is communicated like a disease, and it was to this universal contagion that Enid succumbed. But what is left now is, must be, sweet and at peace. And it is because I want to hold this sense of her, this child-self of her in my memory, that I’m leaving all this tumult. Can’t you understand?”

“But you’re not going alone?” he interrupted passionately, without following her words.

She did not answer and he folded his arms, gripping the sleeves of his coat. All at once he looked up at her and beneath their lids, his eyes flashed.

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"But you have no right to go off and hide yourself in the state you're in. Have you thought of that? After what you have been through it would be madness! If you have no consideration for me, you at least owe something I should suppose to — to your husband." The word cost him an effort, but he hurled it at her.

She looked closely into the moved face. Then she averted her gaze.

"Yes, I have thought," she answered in a voice that was scarcely audible, "but whatever I do, makes no difference to Mr. Howard. He has given me my freedom."

"Beulah! — Beulah?" he cried, and in spite of himself, as he leaned over the edge of the carriage and caught her hands, the second cry was a question.

She answered it, bringing her eyes around once more to meet his, and for an instant they looked steadily at each other. It was such a glance as they had never before exchanged; clear, penetrating, freighted with emotion. Suddenly he started and turned almost as pale as she.

Then the clasp of their hands loosened and his arms fell down at his sides.

At the end of the *impasse* another of the carriages was appearing. He watched her drive away, and mechanically pushed back a lock of hair that clung to his forehead. Then he began to examine one of his gloves. He was compact of the faults and vanities common to most men of his age, but what he felt for Beulah now

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was a reverence and a pity that transcended even his passion. All at once he straightened himself, a look of determination altering his white face.

At any cost she must not be allowed to go away alone. Her motive seemed to him the fancy of extreme grief. And once more, his apprehensions sharpened by the recent tragedy, fear took hold of him. The next moment he was rolling towards the Clairemont. His dislike of Howard had never abated. Now, as he thought of the scholar, his heart contracted. Nevertheless, he resolved, if he were so fortunate as to find him, he should be brought to his senses. At least, he should be made to interfere.

And it so chanced that he found him. Howard in the northern Scottish moors, had learned of the tragedy through the papers only the day before, and, unable to restrain his anxiety concerning Beulah, from whom he had heard nothing since April, he had come to Paris in all haste.

He still wore his travelling-ulster and was in the act of unlocking his portmanteau, when Richard, with no ceremony whatever, walked in upon him.

He looked around in some surprise, and then advanced towards the other. "You come from Beulah?" he asked. "How is she?"

The agitation under the question was quite evident. He looked haggard and older than Richard had ever seen him. His thick gray locks were in disorder, and his eyes burning. Nevertheless the younger man

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steeled himself against a rising sympathy which the other's appearance excited in him.

"Yes, I come from her," he said. And then his passion of scorn and condemnation burst from him in all its vehemence. "I come from her," he repeated, "but not at her request or with her knowledge. Mr. Howard, you have separated from your wife. Why?" With his hands on his hips, his head raised, Richard hurled the question straight at the other.

Its impact was fire. Howard's small kindly eyes blazed, but the sparks were those struck from a rock. He stiffened as though a rod of steel had passed through him. But Richard was beyond caution. His attitude was a challenge. And finally John Howard spoke.

"And if," he said, with his lip drawn back tightly against his teeth and speaking very slowly while he scrutinized the other, "I deny your right to question me — *you* of all others?"

Richard changed colour, but before the keen repudiation of his look, John Howard turned suddenly away. The youth and bravery of the face tortured him.

"Perhaps," he went on rapidly, "I am giving my wife her freedom in order to assure her happiness. And if I could assure her happiness, without assuring yours, it is unnecessary for me to say that I should do so."

The surging bitterness behind the words carried a revelation. The scales dropped. Richard started, reddened, then every trace of hauteur vanished from his manner.

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"Yes, yes," he said gently, "I understand that. And you are not thinking of doing this —" he hesitated but was still eager, "because you doubt her?"

"Doubt her!" echoed the other. "Who ever said that I doubted her?"

"Then, for God's sake," cried the younger man, equally excited, "go and prove that you do not doubt her. Believing that where she goes is nothing to you, she is leaving Paris now. She is stricken, broken. She has a wild idea that she'll be able to get a clearer sense of Enid, if she goes away. She's ill, I tell you."

John Howard was trembling. He rested one hand on the back of a chair.

Richard answered the unspoken question, which seemed to hang in the silence.

"You would like, perhaps, to understand the whole situation?" he said, "It is this," and he flung back his head, eyeing the other unflinchingly, "that whatever my feeling was, and still is, Mr. Howard, Beulah never gave me one shred of encouragement. Her affections," he added in a different tone and still keeping his eyes fixed on the other, "are centred elsewhere."

For an instant the two men faced each other. Then each held out a hand. The sharpness of the experience had left an impress like age on the younger's countenance, but Howard's face was touched with sudden and tumultuous youth. They seemed to have exchanged places. The next moment they were in the street. Richard threw open the door of the waiting cab, and

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John Howard, his hat shaking in his hand, was hurried into it.

After it had rolled away, the young man stood undecided on the curb. His thought travelled over his whole knowledge of Beulah, her rare and passionate friendship for another woman and her consequent comparative indifference to others. She had been as unconsciously cruel and blind in this affection as a child. It was the selfishness of profound innocence. But she was awake at last, it seemed, and Howard was to receive his reward. Well, he deserved it. And at this point the fact of Howard's suffering and his willingness to sacrifice himself, came home to Richard and saved him from degrading jealousy. As for himself, — a spasm of pain contorted his face. Well, at least this last act was not unworthy of her, and he raised his head.

A single star hung in that sky of early evening, a solitary luminary that out of the troubled heavens, shone upon him with a grave and pure beneficence.

His lips moved.

He was saying farewell.

In the midst of the desolated studio Beulah was alone. She had entered with a certain eagerness and had closed the doors, even the windows. A profound silence reigned. She looked about her. The lingering twilight, concentrated by the large square of glass in the ceiling, gave the place an unexpected luminousness, and

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on every side shone pieces of Enid's work. The tense, exalted look which had touched the face of the lonely woman at the grave, increased. Once more Durien's words, "She has conquered!" sounded in her ears, and she was seized with a passionate longing to convey this message to all those little waiting figures.

Imperceptibly, the minutes passed.

But abruptly the outer door swung on its hinges and a low indefinite murmur penetrated the silence. To her overwrought nerves, it seemed like the tread of innumerable feet, and with a movement of horror, she shrank against the wall.

On and on they came, in multitudes, in legions — rapacious, insatiable! In that conflict of the cities! In that race without beginning and without end! In that struggle for bread, for gold, for excellence, for glory! And once again a blast like the fierce breath of runners, struck across her face.

With a cry she flung out her arm.

And at that instant John Howard emerged from the shadows and from the years that had chained him.

"Beulah!" he whispered.

At which no sound escaped her. She merely leaned towards him with an impulse of her whole frame. Like a blind thing, with eyes closed, she staggered to him, lifting her face. But when his lips met hers, she looked at him — looked as they look, who, having been blind, see for the first time.

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